

THE FARCICAL ELEMENTS IN SELECTED COMEDIES OF MOLIÈRE

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## PREFACE

The author feels that an explanation about form and content are in order. The purpose of this thesis is to define and explain farce in order to understand what is farcical in certain comedies of Molière.

The author might have avoided repetition by presenting the individual plays in the form of a study of topics and themes. However, he feels that it would be more advantageous to discuss the plays individually and make useful comparisons within the study of each play. Even in a study of topics and themes there would have to be a place for discussion of various influences on each play. The author believes that such an organization would yield less neatness and economy than the present organization. Yet, to present the plays under a study of topics and themes presupposes a deep understanding and analysis of the plays that one acquires only after several years of reading and reflecting. This is the author's first encounter with several of the plays and it seems that such a method of presentation is therefore indicated. Of course, no work should be studied in isolation from the whole. In the case of Molière the reader continually perceives similarities between the plays themselves and between his plays and the works of other authors.

The author has attempted to use the same analysis for all eight comedies where feasible but at times it seemed necessary to change the analysis slightly, for all plays are not alike. In addition, the author found more bibliographical resources for some plays than for others. This would explain in part the length of the discussions of the plays. Four plays are composed of three acts while the other four have only one act. The exposition attempts to treat essentially the same topics

in each play but often in a different order because of the author's reading. For the most part the reader will observe the following topics: influences, theme and plot, jeux de scène, characters, style and composition.

The selection of plays is rather arbitrary. When the author first studied Molière, he read the best known plays such as Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme and Tartuffe. After this course of study the author became interested in farce and its use in the comedies of Molière. He already realized that certain comedies like Tartuffe were almost tragic and that they revealed very little of what he considered to be low comedy or farce. As the author increased his understanding of farce, he began to read plays which critics considered farcical or which he felt might exemplify the characteristics of farce.

The author learned that the early plays of Molière were examples of almost pure farce and that as Molière matured, his plays lost the characteristics of farce but never entirely. Various works suggested the influence of the Italian commedia dell' arte and traditional French farce. The author set out to ascertain these influences and their importance in the career of Molière. The approach has thus been somewhat historical.

One of the major difficulties that a critic faces today is the danger of anachronism. That is to say, he consciously or unconsciously applies twentieth-century ideas to a seventeenth-century writer. What is comedy today? What is laughable for the twentieth-century man? Can it be the same for the spectator at the performances of Molière's plays? The corrective for this danger is probably to read works written in both the seventeenth century and later centuries. Yet, most people will

agree that Molière is universal. People of different nationalities laugh at his comedy and people of past centuries have laughed without doubt at the same things. What seems essential is that one enjoys the plays for that is the first objective of Molière.

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## CHAPTER I

### COMEDY AND FARCE

As farce belongs in a general way to the larger field of comedy, it would be helpful to first define comedy. The word "comedy" has come to mean high comedy although it comes from the Greek komoidia, which is derived from komos, banquet or festival and aeidein, to sing. Comedy has been defined as "any of various types of play or motion picture with more or less humorous treatment of characters and situation, and a non-tragic ending."<sup>1</sup> Can one even explain a joke or a funny play? Why does one laugh? Does one reflect after laughing? Farce, however, emphasizes humor, unrestrained laughter and action; i.e., in the case of low comedy the playwright and the audience are not aware of a true character analysis or moral consciousness. In addition, farce is restricted to the lower level of reality while comedy is an advancement to a higher reality. True comedy is spiritual; farce is mechanical. The playwright attempts to make the audience laugh without any feeling of discontent and thought-provoking lines. Comedy, both high and low, is a catharsis. It serves a purpose if it takes you out of yourself by arousing the laughter of heart and mind in one. In answering the question "Why does one laugh?" it is essential to remember that it helps to be around others when laughter is expected by the playwright. This is in other words an echo of laughter.

Although the author will point out later a few passages which are caustic and satirical in themselves, in general farce and satire are two different genres. According to Webster satire can refer to (1) "a

literary work in which vices, follies, stupidities are held up to ridicule and contempt" or (2) "use of ridicule, sarcasm, irony to expose, attack or deride vices, follies."<sup>2</sup> Part of the difficulty in understanding the differences between all these genres is that the average individual commonly uses them interchangeably. For this reason the word "burlesque" may even be closely associated with farce. But "burlesque" may be a satirical imitation or a sort of vaudeville characterized by a display of nudity. Nudity may be a characteristic of some but not all farces.

Neither is farce a comedy of manners nor slapstick. A comedy of manners is "a type of comedy depicting and satirizing manners and customs of fashionable society."<sup>3</sup> The primary objective of farce is not to satirize manners of society. The author believes that slapstick should be considered as an element of farce instead of a crude comedy form. If one keeps in mind the original definition of slapstick, "an implement made of two pieces of wood that slap together loudly when hit against something," it will be easier to understand the definition of farce which thrives on violent activity and horseplay.<sup>4</sup>

Before discussing farce it is important to remember the relativity of these forms of comedy. If aggression is associated with comedy and sympathy with tragedy, there is no doubt about the position of farce. Koestler states that regardless of what the composition of emotive quality is, it will only produce comic effects when the aggressive component, however sublimated, dominates the opposite tendency which is self-transcendence or sympathetic identification.<sup>5</sup> The audience during the performance of a farce does not identify itself with a particular person and feel pity for his ridiculed behavior. Whereas civilized

humor is less aggressive due to an humanitarian evolution, humor as a result of self-assertion is associated with children and people of low mentality. This is not to imply that the playwrights are of low mentality. In summary Koestler lists these traits of the comic: emotions of scorn, superior feeling, nonidentification, aggressive and physical aspects of sexuality. The tragic then refers to sympathy, projection, identification, the self-transcending aspects of sexual love.<sup>6</sup> What is most important is the position of coarse humor which lies at the bottom of Koestler's scale with much self-assertive or aggressive behavior ( see Appendix).

The word "farce" comes from the French verb "farcir," to stuff. The Latin form "farcire" meant to stuff or fill in and was so called because early farces were used to fill in the interludes between parts of a play. Certainly farce is absurd and is tersely defined by Webster as "exaggerated comedy based on broadly humorous situations; play intended only to be funny."<sup>7</sup>

It has been established that farce relies upon laughter or humor; yet, the commedia dell' arte, to be discussed later, suggests another important attribute -- action. Action is necessary "car la farce vit à la fois par le mouvement et par le comique ... le genre ( farce) supporte à peu près tout ce que supporte la comédie, mais en le subordonnant au rire et à l'action."<sup>8</sup> Bray has challenged Lanson's statement that "la source du rire est hors de l'intrigue, uniquement dans le rapport sensible de ses figures à la vie vraie." The author and Bray must admit that this definition is not applicable to farce. Bray says that the most significant source of laughter for farce is in action. "Elle est



dans la participation du spectateur à la fiction; non point dans la perception d'un rapport entre la comédie et la réalité mais dans l'installation tranquille du spectateur dans une irréalité heureuse qui se suffit à elle-même et fait naître la gaieté."<sup>9</sup> The following statement adds support to the idea that farce belongs to low comedy: "Dans la farce, la convention est souveraine: c'est le plus artificiel des genres comiques. Il le doit à l'in vraisemblance et à la banalité de l'intrigue, à la typification des personnages et à la mécanique des lazzi."<sup>10</sup> The last term refers to a technique of the commedia dell' arte and will be discussed later.

Since Bergson is recognized as a foremost authority on the psychology of laughter and comedy, the author is going to introduce some of his beliefs which bear directly and indirectly on farce. What Bergson seems to be interested in is movement, but a mechanized movement. He is suggesting as previously mentioned that the plots of farce and light comedy are mechanical or contrived. Such techniques as disguise and deformity are ludicrous because of absurdity. The spectator will laugh at someone who is not normal or something which he himself considers silly in reference to his code of conduct. When passengers are rescued from a wrecked steamer, the custom-house officers, after rushing to the scene to offer assistance, may ask the survivors if they have anything to declare. This is a kind of mechanical response or automatic regulation of society. But such an answer is not consistent with the situation.<sup>11</sup> Gestures become funny if imitated. If one no longer acts as himself and becomes a rigid, fixed pattern his automatism can be brought out by the actor -- this is for Bergson an essence of the ludicrous. However, the artificial

mechanization is not easy to perceive in the farces; that is, real life does not repeat itself or should not at least.

As the author was discussing Koestler's statements that self-assertion is associated with people of low mentality, he mentioned coarse humor. The author also mentioned that farce ( as a part of low comedy) is a drama depending for amusement on the situation rather than on the interest in a character. "It relies upon absurd situations or exaggerations of character, which are obvious to everyone, and which require little subtlety or intelligence to perceive."<sup>12</sup> Keeping in mind the association of action, coarse humor and convention, the reader is now ready to follow the history of farce and eventually see how Molière actually "lifted" farce from the twelfth and later centuries to the seventeenth century.

## CHAPTER II

### EVOLUTION OF FARCE

The farce of Molière evolved from two major sources: (1) traditional French farce which began in the Middle Ages and (2) the commedia dell' arte of the Italian Renaissance. One finds information to suggest the development of farce from the Roman theater.

The vulgarity of farce is traced back to the Roman mimes, then to the joculatores, the jongleurs, the contrefazadors up to the early farceurs. The joculatores were clowns or buffoons, who did not need a stage but any place like an inn or a crossroads. After the jongleurs, descendants of the joculatores, the contrefazadors appeared. These were a class of jongleurs in the Provençal tongue and were called thus because they imitated the manners and characters of men. Smith adds that the old French farce goes back to the jongleur's monologue which has the theme of physical love and deceptions on the part of the husband.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest record for French farce is in the Middle Ages. The liturgical drama of the thirteenth century had its influence on French low comedy. Two dramas by Adam de la Halle typify this early period: Jeu de la Feuillée and Jeu de Robin et de Marion. The first is a kind of thirteenth-century folly characterized by the use of satire (as a device, not a genre) and supernatural clowning. It includes characters such as Adam, the hero, the doctor, the fool, fairies and a Goddess of Fortune. A few of these resemble the later "stock" characters of the Italian theater. The second play, Robin, is characterized by a pastoral, lyrical verse with a comic opera libretto.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous examples of farce in the Middle Ages could be set forth as sources for the early farces of Molière, but the length of this thesis does not permit such an enumeration. It will be best to keep these particular farces of the twelfth to the fourteenth century in mind as the author discusses the Médecin volant and La Jalousie du barbouillé of Molière. One amusing tale of this period is the Fabliau du Vilain mire which relates the story of a peasant beating up his wife each morning. Two messengers from the king are sent to secure a doctor. When they arrive at the peasant's home, the wife informs them that they have to beat her husband to get him to do anything. Molière may have seen also de celui qui enferma sa femme en une tor [sic]. Since there are so many of these farces during the twelfth century, Petit de Julleville suggests that Molière is more of an heir of the nation and that he did not know about these texts.<sup>3</sup>

Why has farce lasted if it is so simple? That is one reason why it has lasted. The old farce had no moral or social aim, only le gros rire. The language was that of real men and women; at least the words were not à double entente. There was no concern for the spiritual. The themes centered around domestic discord -- beating, robbery and adultery. Consequently the characters included the shrewish wife, lover and deceived husband or at other times the crafty servant, learned doctor, cook, boor, clown, etc.

One could also study the laughter of the bourgeois or what is equivalent to a peasant class during the Middle Ages. This bourgeois laughter was either the physical laughter of sensual gratification from the obscene farce or the emotional laughter of cruelty and contempt

caused by mishaps of neighbors. The spectator can laugh, for example, when he sees the husband robbed because he thinks his own gold is safe. The audience is in a sense looking through the glasses of the protagonist; i.e., he feels safe as he identifies himself with the protagonist. Smith even refers to this as the sensuous, fearful and cruel laughter of animal-like, half-civilized man. Smith further suggests that this stress on the sensual and domestic happenings was common to both the fabliaux and the jongleurs' monologues. The difference between these two predecessors of farce is that the monologues produced the method of farce and the fabliaux contributed to the tone.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of these lucid explanations a controversy exists concerning the relationship of sotie and farce. In the fifteenth century three types of popular drama were written: (1) moralités, allegorical and didactic, (2) soties, broad political and social satires, and (3) farces. Perhaps the confusion occurs due to Petit de Julleville's definition for sotie: "toute pièce jouée par des sots." Smith has thus proposed the term "moral farce" to label the comic morality and sotie.<sup>5</sup> The author adds the comments of a recent authority to disprove the validity of Julleville's definition. The sotie is satirical, not didactic or humorous. In her discussion Barbara Cannings Bowen continually asks herself what is the play about. Her objective is to classify correctly farce as a literary genre and to disprove Julleville's assertion that both farce and the sotie belong together. Mlle Droz was also against the equating of farce with sotie merely because the "sots" played both farce and the sotie. "Cette affirmation est très importante, car elle prouve d'une façon irréfutable que la distinction que nous cherchons à établir entre la

sottie et la farce n'existait pas dans le texte, et que Pathelin et tout ce répertoire pouvait être joué par des sots." Her definition of farce is similar to the above discussion in that farce is a "slice of life," a comic distortion yet close to reality. On the other hand the soties have no connection with daily life. The characters are symbolic, the content satirical or fantastic and the language "stylized and full of point." In a summary the sottie has many organized trioletts and rondeaux; the farce, few organized trioletts and rondeaux. Secondly, the sottie has allegorical and satirical or non-existent action. For example, in Les Trois Galants et un badin the characters sit and chat. In the farce a point must be made; there must be some physical activity such as beating. Thirdly, the sottie is usually pure satire but the farce has "no axe to grind." For this reason, the farce must leave the spectator's mind at ease.<sup>6</sup>

The following explanation should reveal the close relationship between farce and the Italian theater. Arte means the "special art of playing these pieces." Commedia all'improviso or commedia a soggetto are terms which were used in earlier times for this kind of theatrical art. It is what the French call comédie de fantaisie. The actors improvise ( all'improviso ) and they proceed from the only written portion which is the subject ( a soggetto ).<sup>7</sup> The commedia was, if any, a distinct genre often called the comédie à l'improptu and also as mentioned above comédie improvisée. Dr. Michele Scherillo commented that it was a form of comedy which "in distinction to written comedies, was not and could not be performed except by professional actors."<sup>8</sup> It was not easy to be a good improvisator whose acting determined the success of the performance

more than the scenarios, or outlines. This special performer had to keep himself from overplaying his part to the detriment of other roles. Thus a spirit of camaraderie prevailed. This mutual co-operation was generally lacking in ordinary drama troupes.<sup>9</sup> Riccoboni in Histoire du théâtre italien summarizes the role of the actor as follows: "The curse of improvisation is that the skill of the good actor is absolutely at the mercy of the person with whom he is conversing. It is not figue, memory, voice, sentiment that suffice for the improvisatorial actor; he will fail unless he has a lively and fertile imagination, a great felicity in expression, unless he possesses all the graces of language, unless he has become fully acquainted with the requirements of all the different situations in which his role places him."<sup>10</sup>

The same scenario may be treated in various ways and seem to be a different play each time. It is up to the actor to be extremely creative. People feel better and therefore say better what they invent than what they borrow from others with the aid of memory. A drawback of improvisation as already alluded to is that the success of the best actor depends upon his partner in the dialogue. If he must act with a fellow actor who does not reply exactly at the right moment or who interrupts him in the wrong place, his own speech will be retarded and the liveliness of the wit will be killed.<sup>11</sup> There is an element of spontaneity in this type of acting.

Where did this type of acting develop and when? The origin is usually placed in the mid sixteenth century but the atellanae were popular just before this time. The latter were comedies, popular farces, parodies, political satires in which the roles were always played by the same

character. If the actor could not think of his words previously suggested in the scenario, he could use a slapstick. For example, Harlequin used a bat when he could not improvise from the scenario.<sup>12</sup> After the Atellan farce, in which some memory was mixed with improvisation, appeared the commedia dell' arte, which was a fusion of popular traditions and the spirit of the Renaissance. The mimics and clowns of the thirteenth century left their mark. It took place both in the court and in the street. A form of comedy called in France "the erudite" was a result of the desire of Italian writers to deal with comedy in classic imitation. Grotesque situations were frequent in the erudite comedy. One would have the feeling that the authors disregarded rules and the plot: their sole interest was to provoke laughter with the most appropriate means. Then as companies became more extensive, they also became more à la culture. The company of Gelosi, for instance, the first and most famous, was declared académique. It renounced the most bizarre buffoonery inventions.<sup>13</sup>

It might be a good idea to examine a few essential terms of the commedia which have been used in this thesis. The word lazzi was used towards the beginning of the thesis to refer to a main resource for Italian improvisators. Lazzi are "tricks" or "Italian business." They were introduced whenever the scene would drag. Riccoboni added that Harlequin or other masked characters used the lazzi to interrupt a scene. They had nothing to do with the subject and it was necessary to return to the subject. Secondly, this outline or scenario or soggetto was the closest thing to a text for the commedia. As carefully described by Perrucci, "the director . . . must, before the performance, supervise the scenario. His duty is not merely to read over the plot, but to



explain the characters, giving their names and special features, to detail the plot of the play, the locality of the action, and the houses, to enumerate the lazzi and all the necessary items in the plot and to see to all the properties necessary, such as letters, pens, etc., as noted at the end of the scenario."<sup>14</sup>

The scenarios themselves were not always original. Many of the plots were taken from classical literary sources in Terence or Plautus, or from Renaissance imitations of these. The commedia dell' arte often repeated old adultery and intrigue themes of the classic mime and of medieval farce. However, one must study the particular character types to really understand the scenario. The author does not intend to dwell upon this aspect. Reference will be made later to such "types" as Pantalone, Trufaldino, the Doctor and the comic servants (zanni), to indicate that Molière possibly borrowed some of his characters from the Italian theater.

The next question in the reader's mind may be how is Molière's theater similar to that in Italy of the sixteenth century. Sorel wrote the following: "Because they make a strong point of gesture and represent many things through action, even those who do not understand their language cannot fail to understand the subject of the piece; for which reason there are many people in Paris who take pleasure in their playing." Molière was truly indebted to the commedia dell' arte for movement and also certain plots, scenes, episodes, stage "business," intrigues and characters. Molière himself said that the Italian actors helped cure the French of a "demoniacal tone;" i.e., the actor would harangue so that he died on stage from an attack of apoplexy. Du Tralage added

that Molière used Scaramouche as a model in training the best actors of this troupe. Under a portrait of Scaramouche engraved by Vermeulin is this epitaph: "Il fut le maître de Molière. Et la Nature fut le sien."<sup>15</sup>

The Italian actors were not only good friends of Molière but they taught him that an actor without gifts of pantomime and improvisation is not much better than a mouthpiece "which gives as much an impression of a human being as a pricked bladder." Palaprat relates Molière's intimacy with the Italians: "Who will ever bring back to us the marvelous art of Domenico (Biancolelli) and the charm of Nature herself revealed to us beneath the countenance of Scaramouche? This great actor (Molière) and ten times greater playwright lived in close intimacy with the Italians because they were all actors and honest folk . . . ."<sup>16</sup>

A certain vulgarity became associated with the Italian comedy. Harlequin, Punch, Columbine and Pantaloon appeared time and again; often they were so crude that finally the Italian comedy became a stage for gross farces, sometimes funny because they were inept, but more frequently because they were tedious and vulgar.<sup>17</sup>

It was easy for Molière to borrow from Italian plays since up to 1680 the Italian actors continued to perform in the traditions of the commedia. But after 1684 they started to make changes as they put French phrases in their dialogue and even interpolated whole scenes in French. The Italians in Paris were well established as specialists in pantomime, clowning and traditional farces. It is quite likely that Molière attended the Hôtel de Bourgogne as a boy. He also saw mountebanks earning a living along the Pont-Neuf and at fairs by means of farces.

Thus Molière was directly exposed to Italian customs.<sup>18</sup>

The Italian influence on Molière may be summed up as follows:  
First of all, the Italian theater revealed the advantage of increased movement on the stage. Secondly, it stressed the vitality of improvised rather than memorized roles. Thirdly, it suggested the cult of the "voluptuous, beribboned woman" hardly known in France before the eighteenth century. As a fourth influence the Italian theater brought to the French field conventional situations and stock characters, e.g., deceived old men, pedants, absurd doctors, crafty valets, young lovers with domineering parents. Last of all, it helped along with the French tradition to provide an element of vulgarity, a very important element of farce, and slapstick or clowning.

A quick view of the development of French farce may be useful. After its initiation in the Middle Ages farce developed slowly until the sixteenth century. When Louis XIII ascended to the throne, the farce was popular everywhere in France but it was no longer the same. It was a short play of several scenes with little or no action and written in verses of eight syllables. In Paris, especially at l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Italian farce began to influence French farce. Prose replaced verse. The valet became the conducteur of the action and each actor had a mask and a fixed name. While he was making his career in the provinces, Molière experimented with simple farces and enjoyed so much success that he introduced them upon his arrival in Paris in 1658. As the following chapter indicates, the manuscripts of most of these farces have been lost. But from the analysis it seems that the first two plays of chapter III may be considered as examples of early farce.

According to Morris Bishop much of Molière's comic technique came from the ancient tradition of farce, but it was refined and humanized by him. Since his time farce has changed very little. He has become the master of all types of comedy, even this naive form of farce.<sup>19</sup>

As naive as farce may be, it is definitely a respected genre and is used even in his greatest comedies as reflected in the language and physical actions. Molière began as a farceur but gradually rose to the heights of comedy discussed earlier. In the words of the reputed French critic Lanson "Molière est un farceur ... N'entrevoit-on pas aussi plus d'une fois que les farces de la jeunesse de Molière ont été les germes des comédies de sa maturité? Il l'a ( farce) agrandie et enrichie. La farce lui a appris à faire passer l'expression naïve et plaisante des sentiments avant l'arrangement curieux de l'intrigue." Molière kept the old French farce which was a faithful image of the people.<sup>20</sup> Both Petit de Julleville and Bray agree that there was less imagination and more satirical wit and memory in Molière. His buffoonery was more sensitive, more malicious and mocking. His comedy was in written form while the commedia dell' arte was improvised except for the learned phrases.<sup>21</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### ANALYSIS OF THE FARCICAL ELEMENTS IN SELECTED COMEDIES OF MOLIERE

As discussed in the preface the selection of plays has been arbitrary. Considering the comment by Bray that "en un acte, on ne trouvait guère que des farces," it would be possible to classify La Jalousie du Barbouillé and Le Médecin volant as farces without further discussion. Traditionally the tragedy has been five acts, the farce one act and comedy (high) three or five. Bray hints that this one-act traditional farce is disappearing from 1650-1670. Having divided all the plays into three groups of ten each without Pastorale Comique, Bray presents the list of Molière's one- and three-act plays:

Group one: 2 comedies in 3 acts; 4 in 1 act.

Group two: 4 comedies in 3 acts; 2 in 1 act.

Group three: 4 comedies in 3 acts; 1 in 1 act.

However, such a scheme is not conclusive evidence that the farce itself is disappearing but merely as a one-act comedy. Bray emphasizes that in the three groups there are 2-3-6 farces from Les Précieuses ridicules to Le Malade imaginaire.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of what the author considers to be pure farces of Molière and the date(s) performed: Le Docteur amoureux ( 1658), Gros René escolier ( 1659, 1664, also 1662 if the farce is indicated by "Gros René"), Le Médecin volant ( 1659-64), Le Docteur pédant ( 1660, 1661, 1663), La Jalousie de Gros René ou La Jalousie du barbouillé ( 1660, 1662, 1663, also 1664 if the farce is indicated by "Gros René"), Gorgibus dans le sac ( 1661, 1663, 1664), Plan Plan ( 1661), Trois Docteurs ( rivaux) (1661), Le Fagotier or Le Fagoteux ( 1661, 1663, 1679), Les Indes ( 1661),

La Pallas ( 1661), La Casaque ( 1664), Le Fin lourdaud ( 1668-71, 1678). Even this list compiled by Despois and Gustave Michaut in accordance with the Registre of La Grange is not complete or accurate. Some of these titles may refer to the same play, but evidence is not available. In his critical analysis of the seventeenth century, H.C. Lancaster has presented the arguments relative to the validity of the works cited above.<sup>2</sup> It seems most pertinent, though, to present the arguments regarding Le Médecin volant and La Jalousie du barbouillé, the first two comedies to be analyzed for farcical elements.

#### La Jalousie du barbouillé

The source material for La Jalousie du barbouillé proves that the Italian theater was not the only influence. In fact, the author believes that the French tradition of farce has been underestimated by numerous writers such as Attinger. Jaloux corrigé ( Decameron, Seventh Day, Fourth Tale) by Boccaccio and La Rhodiana by Calmo inspired by Boccaccio are the two Italian sources. Two farces of the fifteenth century, La Farce de Maître Pathelin and La Farce du Cuvier, are significant French parallels. The assertion that Molière borrowed at least from the Italian theater is strengthened by the comment of J.B. Rousseau in a letter to de Brosses, November 28, 1721. "Le fond de la farce peut être de Molière, mais comme toutes ces farces se jouaient à l'improvisade, à la manière des Italiens, il est aisé de voir que ce n'est point lui qui en a mis le dialogue sur le papier ..." <sup>3</sup> Even if this is true, Molière still used the scheme of La Jalousie in later plays: (1) Le Dépit amoureux, (2) Le Mariage forcé, and (3) George Dandin. Act III of the latter is closer

to La Jalousie than anything else. This comedy was not, however, such a success as others since La Grange mentions it only seven times from 1660-64.<sup>4</sup>

The only comparison which the author can make between Boccaccio, Calmo and Molière is the different ways of threatening the husband to let the wife back into the residence. Angélique in La Jalousie threatens to kill herself with a knife, La Ghita of Boccaccio's tale is going to jump into a well, and Felicite of La Rhodiana is going to drown herself in the river. Molière is borrowing the form of Boccaccio. Just as in Molière's comedy, the husband becomes jealous. Tofano would not tell Ghita why he was jealous. Actually the wife would get her husband drunk in the evening so that she could spend the night at a suitor's house. After a while Tofano suspects that his wife is deliberately making him drink. As she leaves one evening thinking that her husband is drunk when he is only pretending to be so, the husband locks the door and waits for her return. As soon as she arrives home, Tofano tells her to go back to the place "whence you come." In the manner typical of such a stock character, La Ghita threatens to jump into the well and leave Tofano the unhappiest man alive. Because Tofano still refuses to admit her, she throws a rock into the well to trick Tofano. The latter rushes out of the house to the well. The wife runs in and locks the door and utters insults at him. The neighbors hear the confusion and believe La Ghita's story that Tofano is to blame. Although the wife leaves with her possessions, she returns after Tofano promises to let her do anything she pleases.<sup>5</sup>

Another source, La Farce de Maître Pathelin, is perhaps the

masterpiece of the medieval comic theater in France. Its author is unknown. The main characters are individuals, not character types. The reader is interested by what they are, not what they do. Yet the theme is farcical.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, La Farce du Cuvier also by an unknown author, is characterized by types: husband, wife, and mother-in-law. There is little individuality in these stock characters so that the audience knows what to expect from the actors. This simple farce evolves around a husband dissatisfied with his marriage. He prepares a list of obligations to his wife as she dictates them to him. Later when she falls into a vat, he refuses to pull her out because this obligation is not one on the list. He now has command in the house. As soon as she agrees to obey him, he takes her out of the tub. The whole act is crude and the plot is thin and conventional.

Molière's barbouillé is l'enfariné (literally, the one covered with flour). (Le barbouillé is translated as the one whose face is dirty.) In other words both terms depict a clown or a country bumpkin. In this farce by Molière the barbouillé feels that he has been covered with deceit and that his wife has not been faithful to him.

Certainly La Jalousie is not profound reading except for the sporadic phrases of Aristotle and Socrates. In fact, these phrases are used merely as "stuffing" material in the traditional sense of farce. This comedy can be classified as a farce because of the importance of action, simple intrigue and buffoonery.

As the title indicates the short farce like the source plays develops around the theme of jealousy. However, one does not feel that Molière



is attempting to be a moralist. Le Barbouillé is jealous because he thinks that his wife Angélique is neglecting her role within his household in order to go out with other men. Molière adds one additional type, the doctor who is an arbitrator. He is in reality a charlatan whose answers are only a mélange of medieval rhetoric. He uses Latin phrases and offers explanations which have no bearing whatsoever on jealousy. They serve to amuse the audience and to build up the charlatan's ego. For example, the doctor reproaches le Barbouillé for not removing his hat to show respect and for failing to observe rationem, loci, temporis, et personae. These Latin words are anachronisms and belong to classical tragedy, not to farce. The doctor fails to bring harmony to the husband and wife and continues his nonsensical speech, or verbal fantasy, in explaining that the word galant is an anagram of élégant.

As soon as Le Barbouillé grants that the doctor is "un docteur," he has to listen to the harangue as the doctor proves that he is not only "une fois docteur, mais que je suis une, deux, ... et dix fois docteur. 1° Parce que, comme l'unité est la base, le fondement et le premier de tous les nombres." It is quite probable that the harangue was not written but improvised. As the doctor takes each number up to ten, he speaks of something related to that number. The author has already given the explanation for number one. Number six particularly could have been created in a few seconds. "6° Parce que le nombre six est le nombre du travail." (Scene I)

Once again the doctor starts a monologue quite tedious and contrived. The only point worthy of mention in regards to composition is the bizarre combination which Molière introduces: demonstrative adjective plus noun

plus dans plus article plus second noun and adjective. The second noun then becomes the first noun for the next phrase as follows: "... que cette bourse serait dans une riche boîte, cette boîte dans un étui précieux, cet étui dans un coffre admirable ..." ( Scene II). While this technique implies some adroitness, it is also repetitious and trivial. Yet it is probably due to the absurdity that it commands laughter.

This domestic plot develops quickly when le Barbouillé sees Valère with his wife. In spite of the poor excuse that Valère comes to bring news of Angélique's sick brother, the husband continues to treat his wife with contempt. Before the family quarrel becomes a fight, Molière places the doctor and Angélique's father Gorgibus on the stage. The doctor tries to intercede as the arbitrator but persists in offering his silly explanations. It is impossible for the other characters to speak one whole sentence until the doctor has finished. The following words exchanged between le Barbouillé and the doctor illustrate this point.

Le Barbouillé: Monsieur le docteur ...

Le Docteur: Voilà qui est bien commencé: "Monsieur le Docteur!" ce mot a quelque chose de doux à l'oreille, quelque chose plein d'emphase: "Monsieur le Docteur!"

Le Barbouillé: A la mienne volonté ...

Le Docteur: Voilà qui est bien: "à la mienne volonté!" La volonté présuppose le souhait, le souhait présuppose des moyens pour arriver à ses fins, et la fin présuppose un objet; voilà qui est bien: "à la mienne volonté!"

Le Barbouillé: J'enrage. ( Scene VI)

Just a few lines later one sees a good example of slapstick and the movement characteristic of the commedia dell' arte.<sup>7</sup>

[Stage directions] -- Le Barbouillé, Angélique, Gorgibus, Cathau, Villebrequin voulant dire la cause de la querelle, et le Docteur disant que la paix est une belle chose, parlent tous à la fois. Au milieu de tout ce bruit, le Barbouillé attache le Docteur par le pied, et le fait tomber; le Docteur se doit laisser tomber sur le dos: [this line especially] le Barbouillé l'entraîne par la corde qu'il lui a attachée au pied, et, pendant qu'il l'entraîne, le Docteur doit toujours parler, et compter par ses doigts toutes ses raisons, comme s'il n'était point à terre. '( Scene VI)

Whereas La Ghita in the Decameron went to see another man, Angélique leaves to attend a ball. When she returns the door is locked. Le Barbouillé reproaches her for not doing her housework and refuses to admit her. After a few minutes of pleading she threatens to kill herself and makes the sounds necessary to convince her husband that she is dead. It is easy to imagine what follows. The roles are reversed and the scene reenacted, only this time Angélique is inside and Le Barbouillé outside the home. Angélique repeats Le Barbouillé's speech, probably in a mocking manner. This technique of inversion of roles which was evident also in the Decameron and La Farce du Cuvier is an element of light comedy discussed by Bergson.

In the last scene the couple resolve their misunderstandings in the presence of the doctor and Father. This grouillement of the actors is more typical of the commedia dell' arte than of farce.<sup>8</sup> As contrived as this farce is, there is a certain element of irony which makes it funny. Supposedly the doctor comes to settle the marital problem but is really a nuisance. He acts more like an eight-year old than a learned doctor of his profession. But the audience and the author do not worry about this point. Lancaster remarks that unity of action has been violated; that is, the scenes in which the pedant appears have no bearing on the main intrigue.

### Le Médecin volant

The author believes that Le Médecin volant is even more important because of its plot. According to one anthology this play has served as the basis for the following plays of Molière: (1) L'Etourdi, (2) L'Amour Médecin, (3) Le Médecin malgré lui, (4) Les Fourberies de Scapin, and (5) Le Malade imaginaire. The speech of Jacqueline in Le Médecin malgré lui in Act two, scene 1, is similar to the following line of Gros-René in Le Médecin volant, scene 3. "Pourquoi vouloir donner votre fille à un vieillard, croyez-vous que ce ne soit pas le désir qu'elle a d'avoir un jeune homme qui la travaille?" This play was also more popular, no doubt, given the fact that it was performed fifteen times from 1660-64.<sup>9</sup>

Faguet is convinced that this comedy provides the groundwork or canevas for Le Médecin malgré lui, one of Molière's great successes. The explanation of the title is in the sense of an improvised doctor (Italian), one who suddenly flies in like a traveling salesman, or a charlatan, to exploit fully the situation. That role is performed by Sganarelle, valet of Valère. Men pretending to be soldiers were called passe-volants when enlisted for a while to fill up vacancies in a company; hence the title for this farce.<sup>10</sup>

The play is similar to the Italian theater in its crudeness, (to be proved later), fixed characters and simple intrigue. But it is farcical also because of the noms de farce: Gros-René, Gorgibus, Sganarelle, Villebrequin. The Italian sources are (1) a scenario manuscript of Dominique, played in Paris around 1660, (2) Truffaldino medico volante, commedia nova e ridicola, 1673 (The date does not nullify the possi-

bility that Molière borrowed from the Italian theater.), and (3) Medico volante from Recueil de Bartoli of the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

A major problem is whether Molière really wrote this farce, granted that it is a farce and not an Italian scenario in written form. J.-B. Rousseau, who possessed the manuscript containing Le Médecin volant and La Jalousie du barbouillé in 1731, thought that these two farces were only canevas which Molière "'donnait à ses acteurs qui remplissaient sur-le-champ, à la manière des Italiens."<sup>12</sup> Despois published both comedies from a manuscript at the Mazarine, allegedly the one belonging to Rousseau. Yet Gustave Michaut doubts the authenticity of the text. He claims that the manuscript is not dated and that the farces are complete instead of being in the form of canevas. The proof that the Médecin volant is incomplete is found in scene III where the word "Calimatias" instructs the actor to improvise. In spite of the arguments the author lets the reader decide whether it is more of the Italian or of the French tradition. It is possible to read too much of the commedia into the play and to forget about other sources such as Plautus.

Having suggested that the characters are farcical, the author would like to discuss parts of the plot which are farcical or related to the Italian theater and mention any significant points of composition and style. The plot centers around the desire of Valère to marry Lucile whose father, however, wants her to marry a certain Villebrequin. Valère has just learned from Sabine, Lucile's cousin, that she, Lucile, is pretending to be sick. If Valère can find someone to play the part of a doctor, then this person can advise the patient to go to the country for rest where Valère will be waiting. While Valère's valet plays a

double role of a doctor and his brother, Valère makes love to Lucile. Such a role adds much humor to the play and reminds one of the masked roles of the commedia. Finally Gros-René informs the Father, Gorgibus, that Valère has been out with his daughter and that Sganarelle was deceiving him in this role of a doctor.

Scene II reminds the author of the plot in the Médecin malgré lui. Sganarelle is unwilling at first to play the part of a doctor for Valère. As soon as Valère offers him money, he quickly changes his mind and accepts. In Le Médecin malgré lui it is necessary for Valère and Martine to beat Sganarelle before he accepts this role.

Although the comedy Le Médecin volant is a farce, Molière gives a few indications of his talent as a satirist. He cannot avoid condemning the medical profession even in a farce. Sganarelle answers Valère, "On dit un proverbe, d'ordinaire: Après la mort le médecin; mais vous verrez que, si je m'en mêle, on dira: Après le médecin, gare la mort! Mais, néanmoins, quand je songe, cela est bien difficile de faire le médecin ..." (Scene II). Then Molière uses the lawyer to praise the medical profession. One could argue that this is not Molière's work. The lawyer declares, "Il faut avouer que ceux qui excellent en quelque science sont dignes de grande louange, et particulièrement ceux qui font profession de la médecine ... Ce n'est pas qu'on doive mépriser un médecin qui n'aurait pas rendu la santé à son malade, puisqu'elle ne dépend pas absolument de ses remèdes, ni de son savoir;" (Scene VIII)

The most vulgar scene which certainly justifies calling the play a farce is scene IV. Sabine has just introduced the charlatan to Gorgibus. Here one also sees stuffing as Sganarelle boasts about his

reputation. He adds Spanish and Latin jargon to his French.

Sganarelle: J'ai des talents particuliers, j'ai des secrets. Salamalec, salamalec. "Rodrigue, as-tu du coeur?" Signor, si; signor, non. Per omnia saecula saeculorum. ... Voilà de l'urine qui marque grande chaleur, grande inflammation dans les intestins; elle ( Lucile) n'est pas tant mauvaise pourtant ... il y en avait trop peu pour avoir un bon jugement; qu'on la fasse encore pisser.

Sabine ( sort et revient): J'ai bien eu de la peine à la faire pisser.

Sganarelle: Faites-la pisser copieusement, copieusement. Si toutes les malades pissent de la sorte, je veux être médecin toute ma vie.

Sabine ( sort et revient): Voilà tout ce qu'on peut avoir; elle ne peut pas pisser davantage.

Sganarelle: ... votre fille ne pisse que des gouttes? voilà une pauvre pisseuse que votre fille; je vois bien qu'il faut que je lui ordonne une potion pissatrice. N'y aurait-il pas moyen de voir la malade? ( Scene IV)

As the author indicated previously much of the comedy is farcical because of the action and the disguises of one actor. The spectators are sitting on the edges of their chairs at times when Sganarelle barely makes costume changes or slips out of a window of the house of Gorgibus. At all times Sganarelle must meet Gorgibus as the doctor and then as his brother. The difficulty is making costume changes secretly and quickly. When Gorgibus asks Sganarelle to embrace his brother at the window, Sganarelle "embrasse son chapeau et sa fraise, qu'il a mis au bout de son coude" ( Scene XV). Gros-René and Gorgibus feel bewitched. In reality there is only one person. One almost feels that this is a use of guignol ( Punch and Judy show) or the jack-in-the-box defined by Bergson. This mechanical element of farce or the comic situation refers to a reappearance of a character just like a jack-in-the-box which keeps

popping up ( running gag in the movies).<sup>13</sup>

The last point of discussion is the composition. Evidence of the influence of the commedia dell' arte is found in these passages which leave an opportunity for the actor to improvise. The first example is in scene III in which Gros-René's line reads, "Voyez-vous la connexité qu'il y a, etc. ( Galimatias)." This term "Galimatias," or jumble of words, was a clue to the actor to add as much as he desired. The other example appears at the end of the lawyer's speech in scene VIII. "Vos heures vous sont précieuses, etc." The lawyer could praise the doctor indefinitely if he took his cue.<sup>14</sup>

#### L'Etourdi

L'Etourdi was printed in 1660, acted for the first time in Lyons about 1655 and then performed in Paris in November, 1658. It was played sixty-three times in town and six times at court during Molière's lifetime.<sup>15</sup> Although this comedy contains several farcical passages, it reflects the beginning of Molière as a true comedian and dramatist. For one thing the comedy is written in Alexandrian verse. It demanded skill to create a farce in verse, if one considers L'Etourdi a farce. A few lines such as the following sound précieux and foreign to the farce.

Lélie: Et je crois que le ciel dedans un rang si bas  
Cache son origine, et ne l'en tire pas. ( I, 2)

Is there justification for L'Etourdi as a farce? Matthews offers insight. "Situation conditions character -- whereas in true comedy character creates situation." The spectator is watching an adroitly handled mechanism. The characters are acting to entertain the spectator,



not to make him see himself in a character. Such an identification would lead to a satire or "morality" play.<sup>16</sup> Yet the plot is much more complex than the preceding farces. This comedy also has the movement of the Italian comedies, the reversals of situation, uncontrollable laughter and "types," in addition to the artificial plot. All of these factors would convince one that the comedy is a farce. However, Bray classifies L'Etourdi as the "première comédie. Le goût lyonnais [Molière was at Lyon from 1652-1658] était empreint d'italianisme: on ne s'étonne pas que L'Etourdi soit imité de l'Italien."<sup>17</sup> In spite of the paradox the author believes that L'Etourdi is between farce and comedy.

It is apparent from the following list of sources that one could keep extending the list. Its importance is to prove how L'Etourdi is more farcical and less serious like the commedia dell' arte. The main source to be studied is the comedy by Beltrame, otherwise known as Nicolo Barbieri, entitled L'Inavvertito, overo Scappino disturbato e Mezzetino travagliato ( 1629). The scene in which Mascarille drops the purse could have been drawn from some other Italian farce. The death of Pandolphe came from a story by Noël du Fail. Even though Lancaster does not accept Le Parasite as a source, Robert Jouanny asserts that the disguise of Lélie as an Armenian is drawn from this play by Tristan. Merlin Coccaie's L'Histoire Macaronique is also suggested. Lancaster believes that the episode of Andres, who became a gypsy for the love of a girl abducted by gypsies, is drawn from La Gitanilla de Madrid by Cervantes.

All of the characters except one have an equivalent in L'Inavvertito. This play is not the only source for character origins. "Mascarille"

may come from a Spanish word marcarilla, a little mask, or masquerade.

In addition, Molière may have been thinking of the comedy-slaves of Terence and Plautus when he wrote this line for Mascarille, "Vivat Mascarillus, fourbum imperator" ( II, 8).<sup>18</sup>

The list of characters in Beltrame's drama reveals almost a perfect match for roles.

Pantalone . . . . .	Pandolfe
Fulvio, son fils . . . . .	Lélie
Scappino, son valet . . . . .	Mascarille
Beltrame . . . . .	Anselme
Lavinia, sa fille . . . . .	Hippolyte
Mezzetino, marchand d'esclaves . . . . .	Trufaldin
Celia, son esclave . . . . .	Célie
Cintio, fils de famille . . . . .	Léandre
Spacca, ami de Scappino . . . . .	Ergaste
Capitano Bellerofonte Martelione, étranger . . . . .	Andrés
Laudonia, esclave, soeur de Celia . . . . .	Pas d'équivalent

Molière is more adroit than Beltrame in that he can reduce the speaking parts and leave room for more action. Beltrame uses a lengthy dialogue to reveal the feelings of the two rivals; Molière needs only six lines. In both works it is the desire of the servant to take the slave girl from her master to give to his master. In the Italian work Pantalone sends Spacca, Scappino's friend, for a blacksmith. Celia begs Spacca to take advantage of the situation so that Fulvio, her lover, can enter Pantalone's house disguised as a blacksmith. Unfortunately the rival hears the plea and begs Spacca then not to say anything to Fulvio or Scappino. But Spacca tells the secret anyway to Scappino and to Fulvio, who hastens to beat his rival Cintio.<sup>19</sup>

In L'Etourdi Ergaste, the friend, tells Mascarille that Léandre is going to abduct Célie by means of a masquerade. Mascarille decides to

take retaliatory measures on behalf of his master, L  lie. Each time that L  lie fails to deceive Trufaldin Mascarille reproaches him for his awkward moves. He is l'  tourdi. This particular scene illuminates quite lucidly the use of masks, a characteristic of the Italian theater of the Renaissance.

Attinger criticizes the French play because Moli  re is not interested in the character of L  lie. All which is not jeu, action or comique is discarded by Moli  re. The author believes that Moli  re is justified in not developing his characters completely since the farcical elements dominate. The other criticism is that Moli  re only reports specific incidents instead of staging them. Attinger is being too critical, since despite the title L'Etourdi is not a comedy of character.

One of Moli  re's techniques is to confuse the audience with his use of disguises. In Act III, scene 9, L  andre and his troupe are masked in order to deceive Trufaldin and escape with C  lie for whom he has been caring. Later Mascarille assumes the appearance of a Swiss to enter Trufaldin's home. Again he is doing his best to abduct C  lie for his master, L  lie. But the guardian intends to give C  lie to L  andre.

The plot of L'Etourdi is similar to that of La Jalousie du barbouill  ; both treat the theme of jealousy. It is similar to that of Le M  decin volant in that a servant is aiding his master to gain entrance to the home of a girl. The success of the schemes depends on the tricks of Mascarille. Most of the play then involves the realization of these intrigues and leaves little time for reflection about the characters. The author would like to discuss the plot upon which the farcical elements depend.

The entire comedy may be divided into about nine parts; each is a repetition of the first scheme. In scene 4 Mascarille tries to persuade Trufaldin to sell Célie. But L  lie makes a blunder and resolves to leave all business matters to his servant. As the second scheme develops, Anselme is flattered to hear from Mascarille that N  rine is in love with him. He would like to pay Mascarille to help him win her charm. During this scene Mascarille, playing the part of a pickpocket, snatches Anselme's purse and drops it. Of course, if the audience is alert, it perceives immediately the reason for the removal of the purse. But L  lie is just too stupid to realize that he is supposed to pick up the purse and take it home. Instead he politely asks, "A qui la bourse?" Anselme seizes his purse and suggests that someone may have attempted to rob him.

An example of the absurd motions in farce is found at the beginning of scene 9 when Mascarille comes running onto the stage yelling, "Ah! Ah!    l'aide! au meurtre! au secours! on m'assomme! / Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!    tra  tre!    bourreau d'homme!" ( II, 7) Mascarille is not injured at all but desires to convince L  andre that L  lie has been cruel to him. Thus Mascarille succeeds in obtaining L  andre's ring which will be exchanged at Trufaldin's home for Célie. Before Mascarille can make the exchange, he is intercepted by L  lie who sends a letter to Trufaldin from a Spaniard who is claiming his daughter. The letter is fictitious but convinces Trufaldin to keep Célie. The fifth scheme has failed.

By the time Moli  re writes the eighth intrigue he is making his scenes more ludicrous. This episode has similarities to the commedia. Before coming to the present city of Messina Trufaldin used to live in

Naples where he left behind a son, Horace. If L  lie will introduce himself as an Armenian merchant who is to wait at Trufaldin's home until Horace arrives, then he and Mascarille can take away C  lie. During the conversation it is necessary for Mascarille to provide the answers for L  lie who in all probability will ruin the opportunity to enter Trufaldin's house. For example, L  lie's slip of the tongue is extremely funny when Mascarille corrects him.

L  lie: En Turquie,    Turin.

Trufaldin: Turin? Mais cette ville  
Est, je pense, en Pi  mont.

Mascarille: Oh! cerveau malhabile!  
Vous ne l'entendez pas, il veut dire Tunis,  
Et c'est en effet l   qu'il laissa votre fils;  
Mais les Armeniens ont tous une habitude,  
Certain vice de langue    nous autres fort rude;  
C'est que dans tous les mots ils changent nis en rin,  
Et pour dire Tunis, ils prononcent Turin. (IV, 2)

To Mascarille's dismay this eighth scheme is not successful. Trufaldin learns from his godchild Jeannete that L  lie is not a merchant from Armenia. Scene 5 of Act IV is farcical because of the slapstick. Trufaldin seizes a branch with which he is going to beat L  lie. Mascarille also beats L  lie for his failure to remain clandestine. As L  lie escapes, Mascarille follows Trufaldin into the house as a "defender of justice." During the ninth scheme Moli  re introduces a comic device which is pure buffoonery; Mascarille imitates German in his disguise as a Swiss: "Moi pour serfir    fous" (V, 3). Throughout the entire play Moli  re is conscious of the need for forward motion. It is the combination of physical and verbal jeux de sc  ne which makes the play continually interesting.

Characteristic of L'Etourdi and most of his other comedies are the unconvincing recognition scenes in which Molière attempts to tie all loose ends rapidly together. Andrès is really Horace, brother to Célie. Both are children of Trufaldin. Léandre is to marry Hippolyte and Lélie for his reward receives Célie. It is in the words of Mascarille "la fin d'une vraie et pure comédie" ( V, 9).

### Le Dépit amoureux

Many sources could have been used by Molière for the Dépit Amoureux. Again the main source is an Italian play, L'Interesse, by Nicolo Secchi in 1581. Some scenes were inspired by the ode of Horace, Donec gratus eram tibi. Modifications were made under the influence of d'Ouville's Aymer sans savoir qui or of Boisrobert's Belle Invisible. According to Lancaster the following elements from Le Dépit amoureux are lacking in L'Interesse but appear in Ouville's and Boisrobert's dramas: (1) The heroine's disguise is a result of inheritance. (2) One of the men involved is Albert. (3) One finds a substitution of children. (4) The heroine is not pregnant and does not confide in a man.<sup>20</sup> Secondary sources suggested by Robert Jouanny include Poenulus by Plautus. Verse 231 of Molière's work is similar to v. 819 of the Latin source. "Non, je ne trouve point d'état plus malheureux / Que d'avoir un patron jeune et fort amoureux" ( I, 4). Scene 6 of Act II from Deniaise by Gillet de la Tessonnerie has been added also and even some from L'Eloge de la folie by Erasmus.<sup>21</sup> The French must have enjoyed Le Dépit amoureux. It was performed sixty-five times in town after a premier performance in 1658 and seven times at the court during Molière's lifetime.<sup>22</sup>

How did Molière alter L'Interesse to make his play universal in its appeal? Molière did not use the obscenity of L'Interesse. The love of Eraste and Lucile is similar to that of Flaminio and Virginia. In the Italian work Flaminio presents a necklace to Lisetta, while in the French comedy Eraste gives a ring to Marinette. The repetition by the servants of the quarrel is certainly Molière's own device and is a strong element of light comedy.

Le Dépit amoureux shows progress over L'Etourdi in that the women have more important roles. It is becoming more of a character study. Lucile and Ascagne have active roles compared to the role of an "object of admiration" which Célie enacts in L'Etourdi. Although the plot is complicated, it consists of the development of one theme and not several repetitions of the theme as in L'Etourdi. It is what Bergson defines as the reciprocal interference of series of events. "A situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time."<sup>23</sup> What he means is that the plot is so complicated that the audience or the reader may forget that Ascagne is in disguise as a man and fail to understand why her sister Lucile calls her a brother. Ascagne is in disguise in order to receive an inheritance which only a male heir of Albert can receive. However, her uppermost desire is to play the role of a woman who plans to get married. In this respect the play lacks reality and is closer to the enigmatic situations of the Italian masked comedies. Once the audience understands the two roles clearly, they laugh. They know the real situation but each actor is aware of only part of the scheme.

At the end of Act II Métaphraste portrays himself well as a pedant; in this respect he is reminiscent of the Italian theater. This particular scene is farcical because of the stalling on the part of Métaphraste. Albert would like to tell the pedant some news but cannot silence him long enough. Such absurdity comes to a climax when Albert sounds a bell and scares Métaphraste away. The latter has attempted to justify his "badinage" as follows: "Un sot qui ne dit mot ne se distingue pas / d'un savant qui se tait" ( II, 6).

In spite of these few farcical scenes and farcical characters Le Dépit amoureux is more than a farce. One can find several passages in which Molière displays his poetical language ( see IV, 2). For this reason and the fact that there is character development the author agrees with Lancaster that "the Dépit amoureux is the result of his first attempt to be something more than an author of farces."<sup>24</sup>

#### Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire

Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire was first performed May 28, 1660, at the Théâtre du Petit-Bourbon, a little over five months after the first performance of Les Précieuses ridicules. Sganarelle increased Molière's popularity. During his life he performed this comedy 122 times, more often than any other of his comedies.<sup>25</sup> However, he had difficulty in protecting his rights because as in the case of Les Précieuses ridicules the unscrupulous publisher, Ribou, published a pirated edition in August of that same year. Even after paying damages to Molière, he published a play by Donneau de Visé entitled Les Amours d'Alcippe et de Céphise ou La Cocue Imaginaire, which was identical to Molière's



comedy except for a reversal of the gender of the characters.<sup>26</sup> The pirated edition by Donneau is interesting since it reveals the interest people had in knowing what a woman would do in the same situation as Sganarelle. Molière's plays had thus not only a farcical but also a psychological interest.

This one-act comedy is a study of the simple events of daily life and such features as stupidity, deception and stubbornness. Barbara Bowen divides comic literature into two groups of themes: (1) moral values and philosophy and (2) human characteristics. It is this second group which is applicable to farce.<sup>27</sup> The theme is misunderstanding among the members of two households, a common theme for farces.

Célie, the daughter of Gorgibus, a Parisian bourgeois, has just had an argument with her father about whom she should marry. Gorgibus had decided that Valère will make a good husband and that Célie should ignore her lover, Lélie. She is so despondent that she drops her picture of Lélie and faints. Sganarelle assists her but is seen by his wife who thinks that he is unfaithful to her. The latter finds the picture. When Sganarelle sees the portrait in his wife's hand, he in turn thinks that she is unfaithful. He tells the heroine Célie who concludes that her boyfriend Lélie has given the picture to Sganarelle's wife. When Sganarelle arrives on stage again to fight Lélie, it appears to Lélie that Sganarelle is a lover of Célie. This misunderstanding leads to a slight scuffle between the two men. In scene XXII Sganarelle's wife explains how she stumbled upon the portrait and the other characters explain their true motive in the situation. At last Gorgibus saves the day. Villebrequin announces that his son Valère has already been

secretly married and thus no longer available to Célie. Gorgibus then gives his daughter's hand to Lélie while Sganarelle grumbles because he has been tricked. "Et, quand vous verriez tout, ne croyez jamais rien" ( Scène dernière).

Danilo Romano analyzes the misunderstandings as examples of natural ambiguity of situation. The wife does not deliberately try to make her husband think that she knows Lélie. However, the ambiguity becomes artificial as each new character intervenes and eliminates all evidence which could clear up the ambiguity.<sup>28</sup>

In spite of the seemingly complex plot the comedy is quite successful. Like La Farce de Maître Pathelin it has only one preposterous theme which is embroidered with numerous jeux de scène.

The jeu de scène as defined by Littré would be only physical: "Jeu de théâtre, non donné à certains effets de scène où l'on emploie surtout les gestes et les expressions du visage."<sup>29</sup> But Bowen, Romano, Gaiffe and especially Garapon have shown that there is also the verbal jeu. What usually happens is that the reader is unaware of the second jeu because of the numerous names and classifications of jeux. The author has decided to study the jeux de scène of this play and subsequent ones in terms of three divisions: jeu physique ( comique du geste ), jeu verbal ( comique du mot and verbal fantasy ) and the jeu which is a combination of the first two. The reader may argue that the verbal fantasy belongs more properly in a study of style but the author prefers to treat it as a comic device.

The physical jeu de scène is really essential to the success of the farce. The reader will recall the discussion of slapstick. It is this

quick, live, spontaneous action which is characteristic of farce. Both kinds of the physical *jeu de scène* are found in Sganarelle: voluntary and involuntary gestures.<sup>30</sup> An element of surprise is associated with the involuntary gesture which is often the most comical. The spectator is not prepared for the comic device and therefore derives more humor from it. In general, the voluntary gestures are indispensable for the progress of the plot; the involuntary gestures form the ornaments of the play. An example of the involuntary gesture can be found at the end of scene II when Célie faints. The gesture in itself is not particularly funny. It becomes funny as the plot progresses. If Célie had not fallen, the other farcical elements might not have occurred.

The mere entrance of Sganarelle equipped to fight in scene XXI is an example of a voluntary physical *jeu de scène*. Then follows an example of a combination of the verbal and physical *jeux de scène*. Why does Sganarelle enter equipped to fight Lélie? There is a desire to see an equilibrium between two opposing elements; such an antithesis is characteristic of farce. Sganarelle will utter a sigh of relief once he has hit Lélie whom he considers guilty of an affair with his wife. However, all he manages to do is to hit himself on the stomach and sigh as if getting excited. At the same time he says to Lélie, "Je ne parle pas," implying that the two men can communicate only through a fist fight. The audience should laugh freely at these Tarzan-like antics.

The verbal *jeu de scène* are not too frequent in Sganarelle except for the numerous disputes based upon the series of misunderstandings (scenes XVI, XX, XXI, XXII). Sganarelle's answer to Lélie's question is rather witty and reinforces the comic gestures that Sganarelle makes.

Lélie: Pourquoi ces armes-là?

Sganarelle: C'est un habillement

Que j'ai pris pour la pluie. ...

Sganarelle, se donnant des coups de poings sur l'estomac et des soufflets pour s'exciter.  
Je ne parle pas. ( Scene XXI)

Two of the characters, Célie and Lélie, resemble the lovers of L'Etourdi and Le Dépit amoureux because of their romance. All the characters of this comedy are part of a family. Because of the misunderstandings Sganarelle appears as a cocu who is unaware that he is being deceived. His wife appears to have a lover. Célie's father portrays the usual minor role of the shepherd watching over his flock. The other relatives and neighbors are in the background.

The whole comedy is rather well-written and even contains some poetic lines. It seems unlikely that the present edition of Sganarelle was the expansion of a canevas. Garapon found one verb formed from an adjective with the use of the "-er" verb ending: cocu plus fi plus er ( Scene XVI). Otherwise Molière did not coin new words and the language remains quite comprehensible. Sganarelle, written in verse form, reveals an improvement over earlier farces such as Le Médecin volant. Critics greeted this new comedy as "la meilleure de toutes ses pièces et la mieux écrite."<sup>31</sup> It is then more than a farce.

### Le Mariage forcé

Four years later in 1664 after writing several comedies of character, Molière returns to a comedy which is almost pure farce. It is as funny or funnier than Sganarelle. This time the play includes eight burlesque ballets which reinforce the other farcical elements.

Several editions appeared after the first performance January 29, 1664. The farce must have been quite flexible like the Italian scenarios so that additions could be made. Forced to work fast in order not to keep the king waiting, Molière obviously borrowed his theme from an earlier farce, La Jalousie du barbouillé. Of course, a good source for all of Molière's plays is Molière himself. The characters Pancrace and Marphurius could have been suggested by Rabelais or could have been imitations of stock characters of the commedia dell' arte. In any case the comedy is the work of a master and "malgré son habile sertissure de poésie, demeure dans son fond une farce."<sup>32</sup>

Le Mariage forcé offered Molière another opportunity to excel in the comic role of Sganarelle. This time Sganarelle, fifty-two years old, is about to marry Dorimène, a young coquette. However, after he consults Geronimo; Pancrace and Marphurius, pedants; and two Egyptian fortune-tellers, he is afraid of his future and tries to get out of his engagement with Dorimène. He explains to her father, Alcantor, that he does not wish to marry his daughter but is challenged to a duel by her brother, Alcidas. Frightened, Sganarelle refuses to fight, only to be defeated and forced to marry the flirtatious daughter. In the final ballet a dancing master comes to teach Sganarelle a dance, Spanish dancers celebrate his marriage and finally four galants make love to Sganarelle's wife.

As in Sganarelle there is only one theme and one act. The theme of Le Mariage forcé is the marriage of Sganarelle. Molière takes this everyday event and turns it into a fantasy. Since Sganarelle seeks advice about his marriage, it is a perfect opportunity for Molière to

introduce stock characters of French and Italian tradition. As far as the farcical effects or *jeux de scène* are concerned, Le Mariage forcé is more successful than Sganarelle. One may think that the comedy is a satire on the hesitant fiancé but it is quite general in nature and not specific as for a sotie.

Various kinds of jargon and other *jeux de scène* occur frequently in this short farce. The eight ballets may be considered as examples of entrées, which are a part of the physical *jeux de scène*. In addition to these, one can mention the two Egyptian fortune-tellers in scene VI who sing, dance and attempt to forecast the future of Sganarelle. Yet, this resembles more the combination of verbal and physical *jeux de scène*. In this respect one may see a continuation of the chante-fable of the Middle Ages such as Aucassin et Nicolette. The two Egyptians and Sganarelle speak; then the two women sing and dance. This combination is repeated three times in scene VI. During the ballet at the end of scene VI, Sganarelle meets a magician whom he hopes can foresee his future. While they are talking, four demons place their hands on their heads to make the traditional sign of a cocu.

Other examples of the combination of the comic of word and gesture occur in scenes IV, V and IX. Within scene IV Sganarelle and Pancrace, an Aristotelian doctor, are attempting to discuss the marriage but Pancrace keeps avoiding him. Finally Sganarelle pushes him into the house and locks him in. But Pancrace runs to the window and continues babbling to Sganarelle. At last, Sganarelle is so irate that he picks up some stones to break Pancrace's head. After a few more sarcastic exchanges the doctor prepares to leave, then returns, then starts to go, then

comes back. He starts to leave four times but keeps coming back towards Sganarelle. This movement is even more farcical because of the enumeration of titles he makes for himself ( see below).

In the following scene Sganarelle must hit Marphurius, a pedant, who follows quite well in the footsteps of Pyrrho, the Greek Skeptic, in order to make him answer his questions.

Alcidas, Dorimène's brother, learns that Sganarelle wants to break his engagement. With two swords in his hands he challenges Sganarelle to a duel. When the fiancé refuses to fight, Alcidas hits him with a stick until he agrees to marry Dorimène. This verbal and physical jeu de scène serves the same purpose in a later play, Le Médecin malgré lui, which is to obtain an affirmative answer from the opponent. In the later play several servants beat Sganarelle in order to make him admit that he is a doctor ( I, 5).

Within the category of jargon, a type of comic of words or verbal jeu de scène, the author has selected the following examples. Of course, whenever Molière introduces a pedant doctor, one expects to find Latin jargon but a jargon which also creates an accumulative or snowball effect. As Pancrace speaks to Sganarelle, he uses meaningless Latin phrases to appear learned and dignified. Sganarelle is not at all interested in listening to Latin. Thus the Latin jargon does not advance the plot but instead serves to evoke laughter.

Sganarelle: Il faut qu'on l'ait fort irrité. Je ...

Pancrace: Toto caelo, tota via aberras. ... Oui, je défendrai cette proposition, pugnis et calcibus, unguibus et rostro. ( Scene IV)

Closely related to the Latin jargon is pedantic jargon, i.e., the use of French in a pedantic way. Pancrace uses this jargon to avoid answering Sganarelle's question.

Je soutiens qu'il faut dire la figure d'un chapeau, et non pas la forme; d'autant qu'il y a cette différence entre la forme et la figure, que la forme est la disposition extérieure des corps qui sont animés, et la figure, la disposition extérieure des corps qui sont inanimés; et puisque le chapeau est un corps inanimé il faut dire la figure d'un chapeau et non pas la forme. Oui, ignorant que vous êtes, c'est comme il faut parler; et ce sont les termes exprès d'Aristote dans le chapitre de la Qualité. ( Scene IV)

What Pancrace says is right. "Forma est actus cujusque rei," the Aristotelians would say. It is not the outside aspect but the life of things that counts; thus, the soul is the form of the body. One can only talk about the figure of a hat. In spite of the truth of the jargon it still leaves Sganarelle baffled and irate. Marphurius uses the pedantic jargon on a limited scale. It seems that Molière is using him also as a porte-parole to ridicule this philosophic way of speaking. Marphurius insists that Sganarelle must speak with uncertainty and suspend judgment. Thus he should say that it seems that he has arrived.<sup>33</sup>

Sganarelle: Comment? il n'est pas vrai que je suis venu?

Marphurius: Cela est incertain, et nous devons douter de tout.

Sganarelle: Quoi? je ne suis pas ici, et vous ne me parlez pas?

Marphurius: Il m'apparaît que vous êtes là, et il me semble que je vous parle; mais il n'est pas assuré que cela soit. ( Scene V)

Then a kind of ballad follows in which Marphurius answers each statement or question of Sganarelle in almost the same manner. This is what Garapon calls the variations on a theme. It is the most advanced



stage of repetition, a type of verbal jeu de scène. All the other kinds of comic of words may be found in the sixteenth century and earlier. For the sixteenth century was the "Golden Age" of farces and soties. Molière continued the tradition as the reader has already seen but added a new form of verbal fantasy. <sup>34</sup> In this scene Sganarelle seeks approval of his marriage but receives only meaningless answers. It is rather mechanical and it seems as if Sganarelle is talking to a robot whose mechanism is not working properly.

(1) Marphurius: Je n'en sais rien.

Sganarelle: Je vous le dis.

(2) Marphurius: Il se peut faire.

Sganarelle: La fille que je veux prendre est fort jeune et fort belle.

(3) Marphurius: Il n'est pas impossible.

Sganarelle: Ferai-je bien ou mal de l'épouser?

(4) Marphurius: L'un ou l'autre.

Sganarelle: Ah! Ah! voici une autre musique. Je vous demande si je ferai bien d'épouser la fille dont je vous parle.

(5) Marphurius: Selon la rencontre.

Sganarelle: Ferai-je mal?

(6) Marphurius: Par aventure.

Sganarelle: De grâce, répondez-moi comme il faut.

(7) Marphurius: C'est mon dessein.

Sganarelle: J'ai une grande inclination pour la fille.

(8) Marphurius: Cela peut être.

Sganarelle: Le père me l'a accordée.

(9) Marphurius: Il se pourrait.

Sganarelle: Mais, en l'épousant, je crains d'être cocu.

(10) Marphurius: La chose est faisable.

Sganarelle: Qu'en pensez-vous?

(11) Marphurius: Il n'y a pas d'impossibilité.

Sganarelle: Mais que feriez-vous, si vous étiez en ma place?

(12) Marphurius: Je ne sais.

Sganarelle: Que me conseillez-vous de faire?

(13) Marphurius: Ce qui vous plaira.

Sganarelle: J'enrage.

(14) Marphurius: Je m'en lave les mains.

Sganarelle: Au diable soit le vieux rêveur!

(15) Marphurius: Il en sera ce qui pourra. ( Scene V)

Then after hitting Marphurius, Sganarelle changes roles and he assumes the position of the pedant opposite the irate Marphurius. The author will give only the beginning of this set of variations.

Marphurius: Ah! je m'en vais faire ma plainte au commissaire du quartier des coups que j'ai reçus.

(1) Sganarelle: Je m'en lave les mains.

Marphurius: J'en ai les marques sur ma personne.

(2) Sganarelle: Il se peut faire. ( Scene V)

Scene IV is nothing but four groups of variations on a theme. This time Sganarelle is unable to gain Pancrace's attention and succeeds in expressing only a word or two. That is to say, he is interrupted each time by the charlatan, who speaks without seeing Sganarelle. This scene is quite similar to one in a play of the twentieth century by

Ionesco entitled La Leçon. The scene is too long to be reproduced here but the author gives the beginning of the first set of variations. Each set is separated by a pedantic discussion of Pancrace. This example of jargon has already been discussed.

Sganarelle: Je baise les mains à Monsieur le Docteur.

Pancrace: Serviteur.

Sganarelle: Peut-on ...?

Pancrace: Sais-tu bien ce que tu as fait? Un syllogisme in balordo.

Sganarelle: Je vous ... ( Scene IV)

The author found one example of simple repetition. This device is even more successful because Molière interrupts the enumeration and inserts a repetition.

Pancrace: Voulez-vous me parler italien?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Espagnol?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Allemand?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Anglais?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Latin?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Grec?

Sganarelle: Non.

Pancrace: Hébreu?

Sganarelle: Non.

Panrace: Syriaque?

Sganarelle: Non.

Panrace: Turc?

Sganarelle: Non.

Panrace: Arabe?

Sganarelle: Non, non, français.

Panrace: Ah! français!

Sganarelle: Fort bien.

Panrace: Passez donc de l'autre côté, car cette oreille-ci est destinée pour les langues scientifiques et étrangères, et l'autre est pour la maternelle. ( Scene IV)

Molière could have written these languages one after the other without interruption. But he must have movement in the farce and therefore sacrifices the accumulation for the movement and progression.<sup>35</sup>

Not all enumerations are humorous enough to be farcical elements. In some instances the enumeration is farcical because of its combination with another element. In one of Sganarelle's speeches in scene II the enumeration is composed of vulgar images but Sganarelle stops before uttering anything too obscene. Such vulgarity, characteristic of farce, has been found already in Le Médecin volant ( see above).

Vous allez être à moi depuis la tête jusqu'aux pieds, et je serai maître de tout: de vos petits yeux éveillés, de votre petit nez fripon, de vos lèvres appétissantes, de vos oreilles amoureuses, de votre petit menton joli, de vos petits tetons rondelets, de votre ...; enfin, toute votre personne sera à ma discrétion, et je serai à même pour vous caresser comme je voudrai. ( Scene II)

The enumeration in the speech of Panrace would be especially

effective if the actor uses just the right tone of voice to sound arrogant and yet stupid, and the reader will recall the walking back and forth from an earlier discussion. Anyone should laugh at this list which is too impressive, excessively long and ridiculous.

Homme de suffisance, homme de capacité, (s'en allant) homme consommé dans toutes les sciences naturelles, morales et politiques, (revenant) homme savant, savantissime per omnes modos et casus, (s'en allant) homme qui possède superlative fables, mythologies et histoires, (revenant) grammaire, poésie, rhétorique, dialectique et sophistique, (s'en allant) mathématique, arithmétique, optique, onirocritique, physique et métaphysique, (revenant) cosmimétrie, géométrie, architecture, spéculaire et spéculatoire, (en s'en allant) médecine, astronomie, astrologie, physionomie, métoposcopie, chiromancie, géomancie, etc. (Scene IV)

It is possible that the "etc." is a cue to the actor to continue with the list as he sees fit or that Molière feels that the list is sufficient to create the desired laughter. However, one does not find the word "Calimatias," a clue to the actor to improvise, which appears in scene III of Le Médecin volant.

As far as the characters are concerned, it is significant to discuss the two doctors who are traditional pedants of the Italian comedy. They are not real doctors. In effect, they are wearing masks for they make fun of the medical profession. This character type disappears as the comedy of Molière develops since the pedant and fake doctor belong properly to the genre of farce.

Sganarelle appears to be less of a type than he was in the preceding comedy, Sganarelle ou le Cocu Imaginaire. In comparison with the two doctors and the fortune-tellers he seems to be real. The reader knows him better than he knows Alcides or Alcantor. When he speaks with Pancrace he is only acting as any rational human being would under the circum-

stances. But in the presence of Pancrace he can only appear ridiculous. His efforts to speak with Pancrace become ludicrous when Pancrace refuses to speak to him. Yet Sganarelle is a type for he still portrays the traditional role of the duped husband.

Géronimo, Dorimène and Lycaste, another lover of Dorimène, are rather true to life but the reader knows too little about them in this one-act comedy to characterize them. For example, the author found no farcical elements in the dialogue of Geronimo in the first scene. Yet this is the only scene in which he appears and one scene is rather short to become familiar with a character.

The comedy is written in prose and thus lends itself a little better to treatment as a farce. To the author's knowledge the following words from the dialogue of Pancrace in Scene IV were not in a French dictionary of the seventeenth century and may be treated thus as invented forms: ignorantissime, ignorantifiant, ignorantifié, savantissime. The first and last words are fanciful superlatives with Latin endings. The first three show how the pedant tries to create new vocabulary words from ignorant.

#### L'Amour Médecin

In 1665 Molière presented for the first time at Versailles a comédie-ballet entitled L'Amour Médecin. Seven years have passed since the presentation before the king of La Jalousie du barbouillé and Le Médecin volant. In addition, Molière has shown his skill as a great playwright with the appearance of Tartuffe and Don Juan. One could expect to see less farce in his comedies. This is what happens although he never

leaves farce completely. Even in his last play, Le Malade Imaginaire, which is a poignant satire on the medical profession, he still finds a place for physical and verbal jeux de scène and quick action.

Molière admitted that the play was hastily written. "Il est le plus précipité de tous ceux que sa majesté m'ait commandés, et, lorsque je dirai qu'il a été proposé, fait, appris et représenté en cinq jours, je ne dirai que ce qui est vrai."<sup>36</sup> The plot is very commonplace. Sganarelle's daughter, Lucinde, pretends that she is dying. Actually she wants to marry Clitandre of whom her father disapproves, but the four doctors, MM. Tomès, Des Fonandrès, Macroton and Bahys, who hold a consultation and argue about the nature of her disease, are too ignorant to see this. At last Filerin, a fifth doctor, arrives to settle the dispute but it is not until Clitandre arrives that Lucinde is cured. Disguised as a doctor, Clitandre convinces Sganarelle that he should pretend to marry the sick girl. Then after she feels happy again, Sganarelle can tell her that the marriage was only a hoax. Sganarelle is unaware that he is being duped until Lisette, Lucinde's maid, tells him that a real marriage ceremony has been performed for Clitandre and his daughter.

Except for the ballets the play is practically a second performance of Le Médecin volant. Jouanny has discovered reminiscences also of Plautus and Le Dépit amoureux. The consultation of the four doctors (II, 3) may have been inspired by a passage of Tirso de Molina in La Vengeance de Tamar (French translation of the Spanish title). An important source is the short story, Olynthie, from Le Palais d'Angélie by Charles Sorel.<sup>37</sup>

The theme, the satire of doctors, is a traditional one. Rabelais created a supposedly learned Rondibilis, who quotes from Hippocrates, Herodotus, and Theophrastus. The philosophic comments of Filerin ( III, 1) were derived no doubt from Montaigne's Essais, book two, chapter thirty-seven.<sup>38</sup> Filerin, possibly the porte-parole of Molière in L'Amour Médecin, admonishes Tonès and Fonandrès. "Nous ne sommes pas les seuls, comme vous savez, qui tâchons à nous prévaloir de la faiblesse humaine. C'est là que va l'étude de la plupart du monde, et chacun s'efforce de prendre les hommes par leur faible, pour en tirer quelque profit." The following line of Filerin is reminiscent of La Rochefoucauld or Pascal. "Mais le plus grand faible des hommes, c'est l'amour qu'ils ont pour la vie."

If farce has any satire at all, it is usually general. But the satire of L'Amour Médecin is rather personal for Molière was suffering from tuberculosis ( or lung cancer) and was visiting doctors frequently. He once said to Madame de Sévigné, " J'aime les consulter, pour me moquer d'eux. Peut-on rien voir de plus plaisant que leur diversité?"<sup>39</sup> Since the theme itself is not farcical, perhaps the techniques are as in Le Médecin volant. Once again it is not always easy to perceive the comic on the printed page but only through the imagination or the performance in the theater. According to Molière "on sait bien que les comédies ne sont faites que pour être jouées, et je ne conseille de lire celle-ci qu'aux personnes qui ont des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture tout le jeu du théâtre."<sup>40</sup>

Although Molière uses doctors in this comedy, they are not so close to the stock Italian characters as the doctors in Le Mariage forcé.



So little Latin jargon is used that it does not seem worthy of mention. From time to time a doctor slips into the jargon of his trade. Such jargon in combination with the exaggerated slow speaking of Macroton evokes laughter. This manner of speaking is even more ludicrous because it forms an antithesis with Bahys' mumbling.

Or. Mon-si-eur. pour. ve-nir. au. fait. je. trou-ve. que. vo-tre. fil-le. a. u-ne. ma-la-die. chro-ni-que. et. qu'el-le. peut. pé-ri-cli-ter. si. on. ne. lui. don-ne. du. se-cours. d'au-tant. que. les. sym-ptô-mes. qu'el-le. a. sont. in-di-ca-tifs. d'u-ne. va-peur. fu-li-gi-neu-se. et. mor-di-can-te. qui. lui. pi-co-te. les. mem-bra-nes. du. cer-veau. Or. cet-te. va-peur. que. nous. nom-mons. en. grec. at-mos. est. cau-sé-e. par. des. hu-meurs. pu-tri-des. te-na-ces. et. con-glu-ti-neu-ses. qui. sont. con-te-nues. dans. le. bas. ven-tre. (II, 5)

Molière reveals his talent for play on words in the discussion between Lisette, Lucinde and Sganarelle. It is almost like a tennis match in which Sganarelle and Lucinde or Lisette use words instead of tennis balls. Sganarelle refuses to listen to either his daughter or the servant and later in the scene acts as if he does not even hear them. Within these variations on a theme are several repetitions: "mais" and "un mari." Molière probably changes from "mais" to "un mari" so that the reader or spectator does not become bored by the simplicity of the comic device. Here is the "match."

Sganarelle: Je n'ai plus aucune tendresse pour toi.

Lisette: Mais ...

Sganarelle: C'est une friponne.

Lucinde: Mais ...

Sganarelle: Une ingrate.

Lisette: Mais ...

Sganarelle: Une coquine, qui ne me veut pas dire ce qu'elle a.

Lisette: C'est un mari qu'elle veut.

Sganarelle: Je l'abandonne.

Lisette: Un mari.

Sganarelle: Je la déteste.

Lisette: Un mari.

Sganarelle: Et la renonce pour ma fille.

Lisette: Un mari ... ( I, 3)

Several scenes later Lisette informs Sganarelle that his daughter is seriously ill. At first, she pretends not to see Sganarelle. This traditional jeu de scène is actually another variation on a theme. It is unrealistic or difficult to stage and does not go over well today. The expletive "Ah" and the response "Lisette" of Sganarelle can be even more dramatic if the actor uses facial expressions and body gestures at the same time to portray his anxiety.

Sganarelle: Je suis perdu.

Lisette: Ah!

Sganarelle: Lisette.

Lisette: Quelle infortune!

Sganarelle: Lisette.

Lisette: Quel accident!

Sganarelle: Lisette. ( I, 6)

In his remarkable study of Molière W. G. Moore has mentioned the use of jargon to cover ignorance.<sup>41</sup> This is just not a trick of the doctor who wants to maintain his authority as an expert. Lawyers have

done the same thing. In fact, everyone in some way is guilty of such fraud for in the complex civilisation today one must depend more upon the expert. Does the driver of a car know everything about mechanics? Does the professor know all the answers on the spot? How often does he fabricate something in an intelligent manner? Mechanical jargon is rather prevalent and uncontrollable today as it was in the seventeenth century. In the following scene it is finally necessary for the master to tell the maid not to argue out of respect for the doctor who is supposed to be an expert.

M. Tomès: Comment se porte son cocher?

Lisette: Fort bien, il est mort.

M. Tomès: Mort?

Lisette: Oui.

M. Tomès: Cela ne se peut.

Lisette: Je ne sais si cela se peut; mais je sais bien que cela est.

M. Tomès: Cela est impossible. Hippocrate dit ...

Lisette: Hippocrate dira ce qu'il lui plaira; mais le cocher est mort.

Sganarelle: Paix! discoureuse. ( II, 2)

The entr'acte at the end of Act I could be presented in such a manner to make it a farcical pantomime. Champagne dances and knocks on the doors of four doctors who also dance around before reaching the home of Sganarelle. Both Champagne, Sganarelle's valet, and the four doctors may appear to be clowns from the Italian commedia dell' arte, who often used gestures and noises but no words. L'opérateur, or the charlatan, reminds one of an oriental magician as he sings his burlesque

of Orviétan. Then follows another comical ballet with the entrée of Trivelins and Scaramouches.

Clitandre assumes a mask in Act III as he tries to cure Lucinde of her illness. This trick is as old as the hills but still an effective device used by modern comics. The device is only effective, however, if the costume change is quick. Disguised as a doctor he feels Sganarelle's pulse and concludes from this that Sganarelle's doctor is ill. There is the same jeu de scène in Le Médecin volant.

The characters are more true to life than in previous comedies studied. With the exception of the first four doctors and the characters of the prologue and ballet ( three entrées) the other characters including Sganarelle are real human beings. Bowen feels that those who have analyzed farce have overlooked the human aspect.<sup>42</sup> However, character portrayal is not the most important aspect of farce. The dialogue between Sganarelle and his friends in the first scene is logically developed. The doctors are caricatures of doctors of Paris at that time. Fonandrès is Des Fougerais, one of the most famous doctors in Paris; Tomès is D'Aquin, the king's physician; Bahis is Esprit, physician for Monsieur; Filerin is Yvelin, Madame's doctor and Macroton is Guénaut who would speak slowly.<sup>43</sup>

L'Amour Médecin is a light comedy in three acts which contains many examples of farce but is also a satire against the medical profession. The author has already indicated that the comedy was quickly written and that the structure is not too solid. One may argue that the dénouement of Molière's farces is extremely weak. In this play Clitandre appears in his disguise, marries Lucinde and dances as the play comes to an end.

But in the words of a stage veteran, Louis Juvet, "il y a une certaine sottise et une certaine impertinence à parler de la pauvreté des dénouements de Molière; ils sont de la plus parfaite et de la plus fine convention théâtrale."<sup>44</sup>

#### Monsieur de Pourceaugnac

Although Molière referred to Monsieur de Pourceaugnac as a comédie-ballet, it is more accurately classified as a farce-ballet. In form it resembles the comedy just studied. As Turgeon and Gilligan said, "[it] is another attack on the medical profession, and at the same time a rollicking farce and a satire of provincialism."<sup>45</sup>

The theme is quite simple. A few characters want to break up a projected marriage in order to make possible one that is more satisfactory to the heroine and her friends. Oronte has promised his daughter, Julie, to Pourceaugnac, a stupid lawyer from Limoges, who is about to reach Paris. She and her lover, Eraste, plan with Sbrigani, an "homme d'intrigue," and Nérine, a "femme d'intrigue," to prevent the marriage. Pourceaugnac is convinced that Sbrigani is helping him and that Eraste is an old friend. They turn him over to two physicians, who diagnose and prescribe and to an apothecary, who chases him with a syringe. The chief physician persuades Oronte that his prospective son-in-law has an unmentionable disease, while Sbrigani in the disguise of a Fleming, says that Pourceaugnac expects his debts to be paid by his father-in-law. Sbrigani also convinces the Limousin that he cannot marry Julie, an opinion that the girl supports by the audacity of her greeting. Oronte and Pourceaugnac quarrel, a supposed Languedocienne and a supposed Picarde claim him as her husband

and three children appear who call him "papa." Afraid of arrest for bigamy, Pourceaugnac talks with two lawyers who confirm his fears. He then beats them and Act II ends with dancing. Disguised by Sbrigani as a woman, the protagonist tries to escape from Paris, is insulted by two Swiss, who claim to be on their way to see him hanged, is arrested, forced to bribe the policeman and finally disappears. Eraste acts as if Julie has tried to pursue Pourceaugnac and that he has brought her back. Grateful to Eraste and convinced that no one else wants to marry his daughter, Oronte approves their marriage, which is celebrated by all kinds of masked singers and dancers.

Was Molière influenced by souvenirs of such works as Ménechmes and L'Asinaire of Plautus, the Marquis ridicule of Scarron, La Désolation des filous of Chevalier and an Italian comedy, Les Disgrâces d'Arlequin? This is possible but nonetheless the play is trivial and the intrigue just right to be embroidered with farce. The actors have more freedom in interpreting the play.

The audience enjoys the numerous *jeux de scène* of this farce but they should also feel the satire which lies beneath the farce. The attack against the doctors is more harsh than before. Molière strikes against the province, its patois, characters and absurd manias. When Pourceaugnac is arrested, Molière takes the opportunity to ridicule the venality of the officials of justice and the haste in accusing someone of a crime.

The first physical *jeu de scène* appears in scene 7 of Act I. Two doctors are taking Pourceaugnac's pulse but he thinks that they are maîtres d'hôtel. He simply cannot understand why they would want to

check his pulse. A few minutes later he spits and the first doctor adds another note to his diagnosis. Pourceaugnac decides that he should escape from these two idiots. Once again the doctor adds another remark to his diagnosis: "uneasiness from moving around."

Towards the end of Act I the apothecary approaches Pourceaugnac with syringe in his hand because he is supposed to cure the Limousin. This rather crude scene, in which two musicians and a few dancers accompany the apothecary, belongs to the realm of pure farce and permits the actors to improvise. According to Jouanny, Pourceaugnac protects his buttocks with his hat in the tradition of Molière, then flees the theater pursued by the porte-seringues, returns, jumps into the prompter's box or pops up out of it, throws himself into a chair to avoid the enema, and leaves holding on to the chair as a shield. The characters become so excited that they almost run out into the audience.<sup>46</sup>

The masquerade at the end of the farce reveals the Italian influence on Molière. Various people dressed up as Egyptians, musicians and dancers provide a fanciful ending to all the chicanery of Eraste and his friends. The reader will recall the value of swift movement in the Italian theater of the Renaissance ( see p. 12). It seems to the author that the play would not be complete without these almost intoxicating scenes.

Several times a dispute ends with a fight or slapstick. In the prologue four allegorical figures, the Curieux de spectacles, argue and then in a light manner start a fight which is put to an end by two Swiss. It is interesting to note that the fight is checked by the Swiss who have been considered neutral by other nationalities. A similar situation takes place at the end of Act II. This time two lawyers emphasize that

bribery is subject to hanging, Pourceaugnac hits them in revenge for their allusions to him and two sergeants and procureurs end the act with dancing. When the two Swiss guards arrive later to arrest Pourceaugnac for a crime, they have to pull him relentlessly for he is sure that they are mistaken.

A kind of jeu de mots occurs in the dialogue between Pourceaugnac and Oronte. Each time Oronte substitutes a few words but keeps essentially the same expression which Pourceaugnac uses.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Croyez-vous, Monsieur Oronte, que les Limousins soient des sots?

Oronte: Croyez-vous, M. de Pourceaugnac, que les Parisiens soient des bêtes?

M. de Pourceaugnac: Vous imaginez-vous, M. Oronte, qu'un homme comme moi soit si affamé de femme?

Oronte: Vous imaginez-vous, M. de Pourceaugnac, qu'une fille comme la mienne soit si affamée de mari? ( II, 5)

When Pourceaugnac asks what reasoning is necessary in order to "eat a bite," the first doctor gives an extremely long answer using his medical jargon and a smattering of Latin. The passage is too long and demands a good actor. Like the doctor in Knock, a twentieth-century play by Romans, he uses coined words unfamiliar to the patient and a few Latin phrases. The Latin phrases are meaningful but out of context for the patient does not understand what is happening. The spectator laughs because he does not understand this jargon either and knows that Pourceaugnac is quite bewildered.

Premièrement, pour remédier à cette pléthore obturante, et à cette cacochymie luxuriante par tout le corps, je suis d'avis qu'il soit



phlébotomisé libéralement, c'est-à-dire que les saignées soient fréquentes et plantureuses: en premier lieu de la basilique, puis de la céphalique; et même, si le mal est opiniâtre, de lui ouvrir la veine du front, et que l'ouverture soit large, afin que le gros sang puisse sortir. ( I,8)

The second doctor then adds his scientific approval to this nonsense.

M. de Pourceaugnac has a chance to use his own legal jargon in front of Sbrigani. The jargon just accentuates his appearance as a provincial fellow.

Sbrigani: Voilà une méchante affaire et la justice en ce pays-ci est rigoureuse en diable contre cette sorte de crime.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Oui; mais quand il y aurait information, ajournement, décret, et jugement obtenu par surprise, défaut et contumace, j'ai la voie de conflit de juridiction, pour temporiser, et venir aux moyens de nullité qui seront dans les procédures.

Sbrigani: Voilà en parler dans tous les termes, et l'on voit bien, Monsieur, que vous êtes du métier.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Moi, point du tout: je suis gentilhomme.

Sbrigani: Il faut bien, pour parler ainsi, que vous ayez étudié la pratique.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Point: ce n'est que le sens commun qui me fait juger que je serai toujours reçu à mes faits justificatifs, et qu'on ne me saurait condamner sur une simple accusation, sans un récolement et confrontation avec mes parties. ( II, 10)

Molière took advantage of his knowledge of provincial languages in several scenes. The reader will recall that Molière spent the early part of his career in the provinces. The following examples of peasant jargon are rather accurate and extremely ludicrous, especially to the Parisian who feels superior to the provincial.

- (1) le gascon Lucette: Ah! tu es assy, et à la fy yeu te trobi après abé fait tant de passés. Podes-tu, scélétrat, podes-tu sousteni ma bisto? ( II, 7)
- (2) le picard Nérine: Ah! je n'en pis plus, je sis toute essoflée! Ah! finfaron, tu m'as bien fait courir, tu ne m'écaperas mie. Justice, justice! je boute empeschement au mariage. Chés mon mery, Monsieur, et je veux faire pindre che bon pindar-là. ( II, 8)

Sbrigani tries to imitate Flemish as part of his scheme to convince Oronte that Pourceaugnac owes money. "Montsir, avec le vostre permissione, je suisse un trancher marchand Flamane, qui voudrait bienne vous temantair un petit nouvel" ( II, 3). Molière introduces a kind of local color in the speech of a Swiss-speaking Frenchman. "Ly faut nous loër un fenestre pour foir sti choustice" ( III, 3).

The following passage cannot fail to be funny. It is an example of what Garapon calls incoherence, a farcical presentation of certain narrations. What happens is that the character forgets to mention the circumstances indispensable for an understanding of the passage.<sup>47</sup> Pourceaugnac's delirium reminds the author of the Italian clown.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Des médecins habillés de noir. Dans une chaise. Tâter le poul. Comme ainsi soit. Il est fou. Deux gros joufflus. Grands chapeaux. Bon dî. bon dî. Six pantalons. Ta, ra, ta, ta; Ta, ra, ta, ta. Alegramente, Monsu Pourceaugnac. Apothicaire. Lavement. Prenez, Monsieur, prenez, prenez. Il est benin, benin, benin. C'est pour déterger, pour déterger, déterger. Piglia-lo sù, Signor Monsu, piglia-lo, piglia-lo, piglia-lo sù. Jamais je n'ai été si souï de sottises.

Sbrigani: Qu'est-ce que tout cela veut dire? ( II, 4)

Words in the theater fulfill a triple role of material noises, intellectual signs and harmonious sounds. Farce is usually based upon the

first function. Pourceaugnac acts like a clown who blends words and noises. The Italian comedians who had to use gestures to make themselves understood by the Parisians, introduced French words into their original language and at last based some of their comic effects upon the strangeness of the words. Gesture was substituted for language, which lost its value as a sign. Much of the scene is often left to the actor's discretion.<sup>48</sup> An actor could vary the above speech and still obtain the desired effect.

The next kind of jeu verbal that one finds in the play is simple repetition. The fact that Pourceaugnac is irate makes the passage even funnier.

M. de Pourceaugnac: -- Holà! ho! cocher, petit laquais! Ah! petit fripon, que de coups de fouet je vous ferai donner tantôt! Petit laquais, petit laquais! Où est-ce donc qu'est ce petit laquais? Ce petit laquais ne se trouvera-t-il point? Ne me fera-t-on point venir ce petit laquais? Est-ce que je n'ai point un petit laquais dans le monde? ( III, 3)

Nérine: Le seul nom de M. de Pourceaugnac m'a mis dans une colère effroyable. J'enrage de M. de Pourceaugnac. Quand il n'y aurait que ce nom-là, M. de Pourceaugnac, j'y brûlerai mes livres, ou je romprai ce mariage, et Pourceaugnac! Cela se peut-il souffrir? Non, Pourceaugnac est une chose que je ne saurais supporter; ... ( I, 1 fin)

A combination of repetition and enumeration is used to create quick movement. The success of the comic effect will depend on the presentation of the "Ah" and the speed of the passage.

Sbrigani:                    Quelque chose d'aimable.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah!

Sbrigani:                    De gracieux.

M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah!

Sbrigani: De doux.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah!  
 Sbrigani: De majestueux.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah!  
 Sbrigani: De franc.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah!  
 Sbrigani: Et de cordial.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Ah! ah! ( I, 4)

Then the two characters continue with variations on a theme by Pourceaugnac.

Sbrigani: Je vous assure que je suis tout à vous.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Je vous ai beaucoup d'obligation.  
 Sbrigani: C'est du fond du coeur que je parle.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Je le crois.  
 Sbrigani: ..., vous sauriez que je suis un homme tout à fait sincère.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: Je n'en doute point.  
 Sbrigani: Ennemi de la fourberie.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: J'en suis persuadé.  
 Sbrigani: Et qui n'est pas capable de déguiser ses sentiments.  
 M. de Pourceaugnac: C'est ma pensée. ( I, 4)

Eraste uses an amusing technique in order to gain information from Pourceaugnac. He hesitates and acts as if he has forgotten the names of Pourceaugnac's relatives. "... comment se porte Monsieur votre ... là ... qui est si honnête homme? ... Et celui qui est de si bonne humeur? là ... Monsieur votre ... ? Et Monsieur votre oncle? le ... ?" ( I, 4)

It is also characteristic of farce to refer to characters by profession or nationality. Thus at a glance one sees that only seven characters have proper names. It is interesting that Molière often uses two characters of a profession or nationality: "Premier Médecin, Second Médecin; un paysan, une paysanne; Premier Musicien, Second Musicien; Premier Avocat, Second Avocat; Premier Suisse, Second Suisse." He selects two perhaps because of his use of antithesis in farce. The seven characters who have names are members of Oronte's family or closely related. But the nameless characters represent various professions of the vie sociale. Nérine takes the place of a maid for the daughter. Sbrigani fulfills somewhat the role of a servant for Oronte since it is he who warns Oronte of Pourceaugnac's probable dishonesty. In addition, these seven characters are types more or less and yet they seem true to life in contrast with the other characters.

The name "Sbrigani" was probably coined by Molière from two Italian words: sbrigare, to hasten, and sbricco, rascal.<sup>49</sup> How does one explain the name "Pourceaugnac"? Romano says, "Le rythme binaire se retrouve dans une expression comique, un titre, un nom." The "de" and the elegant ending "-gnac" could make a name seem aristocratic. But this is rubbish. Without the particule "de" and the ending "-gnac," it is the word "pourceau" (pig), a "pourceau" dressed elegantly but who is not less "pourceau" for that.<sup>50</sup>

As far as composition is concerned, the play is well written. How could anyone but a genius combine so skillfully numerous farcical jeux de scène and satire? The verbal satire against the medical profession is interspersed with the jeux de scène so that it does not become too poignant.

One finds this same kind of alternation in a chronological list of Molière's plays although one cannot be sure that he did this on purpose. L'Ecole des Femmes is followed by Le Mariage forcé, Tartuffe and Don Juan by L'Amour Médecin and L'Avare by Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. The first two scenes of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac are characterized by few nonsensical jeux de scène. They are composed of normal, logical conversation. Molière must introduce certain characters and the plot so that the spectator is aware of the scheme against Pourceaugnac. The spectator needs to know what is normal before he can laugh. Once Léonard de Pourceaugnac enters the stage ( I, 3 ), the slapstick begins.

Although the three-act play is written for the most part in prose, the prologue is an exception. This is a combination of overture, serenade, dance and fight which resembles the prologue to Amphitryon. The rhyme scheme of each voice is different. The variety in the number of syllables per line would make the reader today think of Verlaine or Hugo. The author would like to cite the whole serenade but because of lack of space he will give only the First Voice.

Répands, charmante nuit, répands sur tous les yeux  
 De tes pavots la douce violence,  
 Et ne laisse veiller en ces aimables lieux  
 Que les cœurs que l'Amour soumet à sa puissance.  
     Tes ombres et ton silence,  
     Plus beau que le plus beau jour,  
 Offrent de doux moments à soupîrer d'amour.

Molière was not only a farceur but a talented poet as well, as his verse plays testify. The poetry in his farce plays, however, is incidental and found mostly in the ballets. To evaluate him as a poet one must examine the verse plays, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

## CONCLUSION

### CHAPTER IV

Farce belongs in a general sense to the larger field of comedy and should not be confused with satire ( as a genre) or high comedy, which often involves true character study. However, satire of a general nature may be used as a technique within the genre of farce. During the presentation of a farce the audience does not identify itself with a particular person and feel pity for him. A farce is intended to be funny and may often be "stuffed" with patois or artificial jargons and base humor.

The farce of Molière evolved from two major sources: (1) traditional French farce which began during the Middle Ages and (2) the commedia dell' arte of the Italian Renaissance. Both early farce and the commedia dell' arte were often characterized by vulgarity, aggressive and physical aspects of sexuality, exaggeration, stock characters, banal plot, slapstick and quick action. Liturgical dramas of the thirteenth century by Adam de la Halle also influenced French farce. One of his plays used supernatural clowning and nonidentified characters such as the hero, the doctor and the fool. An actor in the tradition of the commedia dell' arte had to improvise as he had only a scenario to follow. A fertile imagination was invaluable. Thus in one of his early comedies, Le Médecin volant, Molière used the word "Galimatias," a cue to the actor to improvise. Molière's comedy was in written form ( more memory) while the commedia dell' arte was improvised ( more imagination). Only his early farces, La Jalousie du barbouillé and Le Médecin volant, appear to have been improvised and then written.

As far as verbal fantasy is concerned, Molière surpassed traditional farce. He created a new form, variations on a theme, a re-statement of the same idea in several different ways. Two excellent examples can be found in scene V of Le Mariage forcé and in Act I, scene 4 of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Another kind of jeu verbal which Molière favored is repetition. The stock characters of Molière often speak strange jargons. Enumerations similar to those in Rabelais are rather frequent.

Although Molière used types, he also introduced characters in his farces who are true to life. The characters are sometimes juxtaposed in opposition, another characteristic of farce.

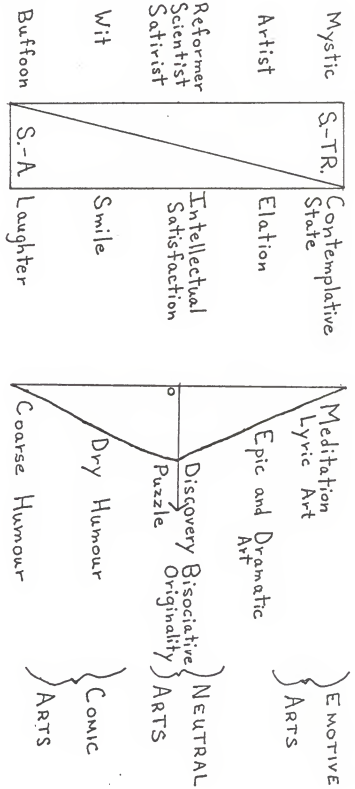
The conclusion of the study of the selected comedies is that the farcical elements as discussed above are apparent in La Jalousie du barbouillé and Le Médecin volant. They are fairly obvious in Le Mariage forcé, L'Amour Médecin and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, even though these plays also reveal the poetic talent of Molière. They are less obvious in the remaining plays, L'Etourdi, Le Dépit amoureux and Sganarelle.

Molière liked farce and wanted to make people laugh. People of all classes including royalty wanted to see plays that were crude, hilarious and trivial. Yet, under the surface of many of Molière's comedies there is an attack on some vice or weakness of society. Molière became more than a farceur but one finds a few techniques of farce in the grandes comédies like Tartuffe.



# APPENDIX

## RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIVE, NEUTRAL AND COMIC ARTS



S.-TR. = Self-transcending Tendency

S.-A. = Self-asserting Tendency

VERTICAL Axis - represents the relative dominance of the two basic tendencies in the emotional charge.

HORIZONTAL Axis-refers to the degree of originality of the bisociative process (zero = associative habit-thinking). 51

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, college edition (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1960), p. 292.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1295.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1369.

<sup>5</sup>Arthur Koestler, Insight and Outlook (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 57.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 239-41.

<sup>7</sup>p. 526.

<sup>8</sup>René Bray, Molière, homme de théâtre (Paris: Mercure de France, 1954), p. 312.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

<sup>11</sup>Henri Bergson, Laughter, an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (New York: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 42-47.

<sup>12</sup>Robert M. Smith, Types of Farce-comedy (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1928), p. 3.

### CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Willard Smith, The Nature of Comedy (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1930), p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française, ed. Petit de Julleville, (Paris: A. Colin, 1896-99), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, p. 112ff.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>6</sup>Barbara Cannings, "Towards a Definition of Farce As a Literary Genre," Modern Language Review, LVI ( October 1961), pp. 558-60.

<sup>7</sup>A. Nicoll, Masks, Mimes, Miracles ( New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 216.

<sup>8</sup>Pierre Louis Duchartre, The Italian Comedy; the Improvisation, Scenarios, Lives, Attributes, Portraits and Masks of the Illustrious Characters of the Commedia dell'arte, trans. Randolph T. Weaver ( London: George G. Harrap and Company, 1929), p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup>Nicoll, p. 217.

<sup>11</sup>Duchartre, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup>Gustave Attinger, L'Esprit de la commedia dell'arte dans le théâtre français ( Paris: Librairie Théâtrale, 1950), p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Nicoll, p. 219ff.

<sup>15</sup>Duchartre, pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 245ff.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup>Frederick King Turgeon and Arthur Chew Gilligan, The Principal Comedies of Molière ( New York: Macmillan, 1935), pp. 2-8.

<sup>19</sup>Survey of French Literature, Vol. I, The Middle Ages to 1800, ed. Morris Bishop ( New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955), p. 185.

<sup>20</sup>Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française ( Paris: Hachette, 1963), p. 513.

<sup>21</sup>René Bray, Molière, homme de théâtre ( Paris: Mercure de France, 1954), p. 310.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>René Bray, Molière, homme de théâtre ( Paris: Mercure de France, 1954), pp. 305-9.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Carrington Lancaster, A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, Part III, 1652-1672, Vol. I ( Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Gustave Attinger, L'Esprit de la commedia dell' arte dans le théâtre français ( Paris: Librairie Théâtrale, 1950), pp. 116-7.

<sup>4</sup>Molière, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, Théâtre complet de Molière, ed. Robert Jouanny, Vol. I ( Paris: Garnier, 1960), pp. 2-3. This is the edition which has been used for quoted passages from the comedies.

<sup>5</sup>Giovanni Boccaccio, The Decameron, trans. Richard Aldington ( Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Books, 1930), pp. 351-54.

<sup>6</sup>Survey of French Literature, Vol. I, The Middle Ages to 1800, ed. Morris Bishop ( New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955), p. 47.

<sup>7</sup>Later dramatists like Hugo have realized the necessity for movement in a drama. Otherwise the characters resemble the immobile actors of Corneille's theater.

<sup>8</sup>Attinger, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>Molière, Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, Oeuvres complètes, Vol. I, ed. Emile Faguet ( Paris: Nelson, n.d.), p. 61.

<sup>11</sup>Attinger, pp. 118-20.

<sup>12</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 1.

<sup>13</sup>Henri Bergson, Laughter, an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic ( New York: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 70-71.

<sup>14</sup>Oeuvres complètes, ed. Faguet, I, 61.

<sup>15</sup>Frederick King Turgeon and Arthur Chew Gilligan, The Principal Comedies of Molière ( New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>Brander Matthews, Molière, His Life and His Works ( New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 62-63.

<sup>17</sup>p. 62.

<sup>18</sup>D. B. Wyndham Lewis, Molière, the Comic Mask ( London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 38.

<sup>19</sup>Attinger, p. 120ff.

<sup>20</sup>Part III, 1652-1672, I, 109.

<sup>21</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 118.

<sup>22</sup>Turgeon, p. 18.

- <sup>23</sup>p. 96
- <sup>24</sup>pp. 111-12.
- <sup>25</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 221.
- <sup>26</sup>Turgeon, p. 55.
- <sup>27</sup>Barbara C. Bowen, Les Caractéristiques essentielles de la farce française et leur survivance dans les années 1550-1620, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. 53 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1964), p. 26.
- <sup>28</sup>Danilo Romano, Essai sur le Comique de Molière, Studiorum Romanicorum collectio Turicensis, Vol. IV (Berne: A. Francke, 1950), pp. 77-78.
- <sup>29</sup>Bowen, p. 35.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 36ff. The author is indebted to Barbara Bowen for her scheme of physical jeux de scène.
- <sup>31</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, loc. cit.
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid., I, 544.
- <sup>33</sup>Ibid., I, 918. Molière may have remembered reading the consultation of Trouillogan by Panurge in Tiers Livre, chapters 35 and 36 of Rabelais.
- <sup>34</sup>R. Garapon, La Fantaisie verbale et le comique dans le théâtre français (Paris: Colin, 1957), p. 254.
- <sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 265-66.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 781.
- <sup>37</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 778.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., I, 934.
- <sup>39</sup>Ibid., I, 779.
- <sup>40</sup>Ibid., I, 781.
- <sup>41</sup>W. G. Moore, A New Criticism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 83.
- <sup>42</sup>pp. 15-16.
- <sup>43</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 778.
- <sup>44</sup>Moore, loc. cit.

<sup>45</sup>p. 681.

<sup>46</sup>I, 876.

<sup>47</sup>pp. 230-31.

<sup>48</sup>Molière, ed. Jacques Guicharnaud ( Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 32.

<sup>49</sup>Théâtre complet, ed. Jouanny, I, 873.

<sup>50</sup>Romano, pp. 43-44.

<sup>51</sup>Arthur Koestler, Insight and Outlook ( New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 273.

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THE PARCICAL ELEMENTS IN SELECTED COMEDIES OF MOLIERE

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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## ABSTRACT

### THE FARCICAL ELEMENTS IN SELECTED COMEDIES OF MOLIERE

Farce belongs in a general sense to the larger field of comedy and should not be confused with satire ( as a genre) or high comedy, which often involves true character study. During the presentation of a farce the audience does not identify itself with a particular person and feel pity for him. A farce is intended to be funny and may often be "stuffed" with patois or artificial jargons and base humor.

The farce of Molière evolved from two major sources: (1) traditional French farce which began during the Middle Ages and (2) the commedia dell' arte of the Italian Renaissance. Both early farce and the commedia dell' arte were characterized by vulgarity, exaggeration, stock characters, trite intrigue, slapstick and quick action. Liturgical dramas of the thirteenth century by Adam de la Halle also influenced French farce. One of his plays used supernatural clowning and nonidentified characters such as the hero, the doctor and the fool. An actor in the tradition of the commedia dell' arte had to improvise as he had only a scenario to follow. A fertile imagination was invaluable. Thus in one of his early plays, Le Médecin volant, Molière used the word galimatias, which is a cue to the actor to improvise. Molière's comedy was in written form while the commedia dell' arte was improvised. Only his early farces, La Jalousie du barbouillé and Le Médecin volant, appear to have been improvised and then written.

As far as verbal fantasy is concerned, Molière surpassed traditional farce. He created a new form, variations on a theme, a re-statement of the same idea in several different ways. Two excellent examples can be found in scene V of Le Mariage forcé and in Act I, scene 4 of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac. Another kind of jeu verbal which Molière favored is repetition. The stock characters of Molière often speak strange jargons. Enumerations similar to those in Rabelais are rather frequent.

Although Molière used types, he also introduced characters in his farces who are true to life. The characters are sometimes juxtaposed in opposition, another characteristic of farce.

The conclusion of the study of the selected comedies is that the farcical elements as discussed above are apparent in La Jalousie du barbouillé and Le Médecin volant. They are fairly obvious in Le Mariage forcé, L'Amour Médecin and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, even though these plays also reveal the poetic talent of Molière. They are less obvious in the remaining plays, L'Etourdi, Le Dépit amoureux and Sganarelle. Molière became more than a farceur but one finds a few techniques of farce in the grandes comédies like Tartuffe.